This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

THADDEUS STEVENS,

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

WASHINGTON, D. C., DECEMBER 17, 1868.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1869.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

ADDRESSES.

Remarks by Mr. Dickey.

Mr. SPEAKER: The painful duty has devolved upon me of announcing to this House the death of my predecessor, Hon. THADDEUS STEVENS, of Pennsylvania.

This distinguished statesman was not merely my predecessor in this body, but in my childhood my father taught me to admire and love him, who was the instructor and guide of my youth and the friend of my mature years. If an intimacy with wise and noble men be one of the greatest blessings that can crown a man, then in no part of my career have I been so fortunate as in my association with Thaddeus Stevens. It was in his office, and in connection with him, that I commenced my professional life; and from that moment, through the turmoil of many legal and political contests, down to the moment when in his last will he selected me to perform the last service one man can ask from his fellow, our friendship suffered neither diminution nor interruption.

Informed that my duty requires of me a sketch of the history of my friend, I hope to be pardoned by the House for any prolixity of statement, promising to leave to others abler and fitter, his associates here who are to follow me, the analysis of his character as a statesman and the story of his struggles and triumphs in this arena, where he was recognized as a great leader and bore the name of "The Old Commoner."

Thaddeus Stevens was born at Danville, Caledonia county, Vermont, on the 4th day of April, 1792, and died at his residence in this city at midnight on the 11th day of August, 1868. His parents were poor, in a community where poverty was the rule and wealth the exception. Of his father

Hosted by Google

I know but little, save that he enlisted in the war of 1812, and died in service. Upon his mother chiefly fell the burden of rearing their four sons. She was a woman of great energy, strong will, and deep piety. Early seeing the ambition and fully sympathizing with the aspirations of her crippled boy, she devotedly seconded his efforts for the acquisition of knowledge, and by her industry, energy, and frugality largely aided him in procuring a collegiate education. He returned her affection with the full strength of his strong nature, and for many years after he had acquired fame and fortune in his adopted State had the pleasure of making an annual pilgrimage to the home which he had provided for her comfort, and where she dispensed, with means he furnished, a liberal charity.

In the last year of his life, in writing his will with his own hand, while making no provision for the care of his own grave, he did not forget that of his mother, but set apart an ample sum for that purpose, directing yearly payments upon the condition "that the sexton keep the grave in good order, and plant roses and other cheerful flowers at each of the four corners of said grave every spring." In the same instrument, in devising $1,000 in aid of the establishment at his home of a Baptist church, of which society his mother was an earnest member, he says:

> I do this out of respect to the memory of my mother, to whom I owe whatever little prosperity I have had on earth, which, small as it is, I desire emphatically to acknowledge.

After attending the common schools of the neighborhood he fitted for college at the Peacham Academy, in his native county, entered the University of Vermont, and remained there about two years. The college suspending operations on account of the war, he proceeded to Dartmouth, and graduated at that institution in 1814. After reading law at Peacham, in the office of Judge Mattocks, for some months,

Hosted by Google

he left his native State and settled in Pennsylvania in 1815, first in the town of York, where he taught an academy and pursued his legal studies. The rules of court in that district having required students to read one year in the office of an attorney, he went to Belair, Harford county, Maryland, and was there examined and admitted to practice in August, 1816. He at once returned to Pennsylvania and opened a law office at Gettysburg, in the county of Adams, and entered upon the practice of his profession in that and adjoining counties. He was soon in the possession of an extensive and lucrative business, to which he gave his entire attention for some sixteen years. I may here be allowed briefly to allude to a few traits of Mr. Stevens as a lawyer. Although not perhaps of great national reputation as such, he was recognized by the profession in a State claiming some eminence for the high character of her advocates and jurists as one of her greatest lawyers, and was so pronounced by three of her ablest chief justices, Gibson, Black, and Lewis, who tried him by the sure test of uniform power.

I need scarcely say that Mr. Stevens shone at the bar with the same clearness of statement, force, and eloquence of expression, power of argumentation, wit, sarcasm, and invective, which he employed in legislative halls, and that there, as here, he was master of all the weapons of debate. As an advocate he was always jealous of the rights of his profession, and resisted their innovation. He was always courteous to the court, and uniformly brief, never speaking beyond an hour upon any question. He never took or used notes of the evidence, the speeches of opponents, or the rulings of the court, trusting wholly to a memory that never failed him. In the preparation of his law he was industrious and careful; here, too, relying upon his memory, his brief seldom contained more than the name of the case and page of the book.

Hosted by Google

In argument he cited but few authorities, and those directly to his purpose. Grasping one or two points which he conceived vital to the cause, he directed all his energies and concentrated all his powers upon them, giving little attention to subordinate questions. No matter with whom associated, he never tried a cause save upon his own theory of the case. At *nisi prius* he uniformly insisted on personally seeing and examining, before they were called, the important witnesses on his own side. Generally relying upon the strength and presentation of his own case, he seldom indulged in extended cross-examination of witnesses, though possessing rare ability in that direction. He never consented to be concerned or to act as counsel in the prosecution of a capital case, not from opposition to the punishment, but because it was repugnant to his feelings and that service was the duty of public officers. He was as remarkable for his consideration, forbearance, and kindness when opposed by the young, weak, or diffident, as he was for the grim jest, haughty sneer, pointed sarcasm, or fierce invective launched at one who entered the lists and challenged battle with such weapons. He was always willing to give advice and assistance to the young and inexperienced members of the profession, and his large library was ever open for their use. He had many young men read law with him, though he did not care to have students. There were, however, two recommendations which never failed to procure an entrance into his office: ambition to learn, and inability to pay for the privilege.

Mr. Stevens first engaged actively in politics with the rise of the anti-Masonic party in 1828–'29, which he joined in their opposition to secret societies. He was elected to the popular branch of the legislature of his State, in 1833, as a representative from the county of Adams, and continued to serve in that body almost without interruption until 1840, during

Hosted by Google

which entire period he was the leader of his party in the legislature, if not the State. During this service he championed many measures of improvement, among others the common-school system of Pennsylvania, which at a critical moment he saved from overthrow by a speech which he always asserted to have been, in his opinion, the most effective he ever made. By that single effort he established the principle, never since seriously questioned in Pennsylvania, that it is the duty of the State to provide the facilities for education to all the children of the Commonwealth. In behalf of this measure he joined hands with his bitterest personal and political enemies. He highly eulogized for his course upon this question the chief of the opposing political party, Governor George Wolf, and denounced with all his power of invective the time-servers of his own party. Himself the child of poverty he plead the cause of the poor, and by the force of his will, intellect, and eloquence, broke down the barriers enacted by wealth, caste, and ignorance, and earned a name that will endure as long as a child of Pennsylvania gratefully remembers the blessings conferred by light and knowledge.

In 1837–'38, Mr. Stevens was a member of the convention called to revise the constitution of Pennsylvania, an assemblage which numbered as members many of the strongest men of the State, among whom Mr. Stevens stood in the front rank. This convention, notwithstanding the able and strenuous opposition of a strong minority, led by Mr. Stevens, inserted the word "white" as a qualification of suffrage, thus disfranchising a race. On this account he refused to append his name to the completed instrument, and stood alone in such refusal. For the same cause he opposed, but unsuccessfully, the ratification by the people.

In 1842 Mr. Stevens, finding himself deeply in debt by reason of losses in the iron business, and liabilities incurred for

Hosted by Google

numerous endorsements made for friends, removed to Lancaster county, one of the largest, richest, and most populous counties of the State, and resumed the practice of his profession. His reputation as a lawyer had preceded him, and his income almost at once became the largest at the bar. In a few years he paid his debts, and saved the bulk of his estate. In 1848 and 1850 he was elected to Congress from Lancaster county, when, declining to be a candidate, he returned to his profession until 1858, when he was again elected, and continued to hold the seat without interruption till his death. His course upon this floor has passed into and forms no unimportant part in the history of a mighty people in a great crisis of their existence. But I have promised to leave to others to say what may be proper in illustration of his great achievements in his latter days.

To those here who judged of the personal appearance of the deceased only as they looked on him bearing the burden of years and stricken with disease, though he still stood with eye undimmed and will undaunted, I may say that in his prime he was a man physically well proportioned, muscular and strong, of clear and ruddy complexion, with face and feature of great mobility and under perfect command and control. In his youth and early manhood, notwithstanding his lameness, he entered with zest into almost all of the athletic games and sports of the times. He was an expert swimmer and an excellent horseman. When residing at Gettysburg he followed the chase, and kept his hunters and hounds.

On a recent visit to his iron-works I found the old mountain men garrulous with stories of the risks and dangers of the bold rider, as with horse and hound he followed the deer along the slopes and through the gaps of the South mountain.

In private life, among his friends, Mr. Stevens was ever genial, kind, and considerate. To them he was linked with

Hosted by Google

hooks of steel. For them he would labor and sacrifice without stint, complaint, or regret. In his hours of relaxation there could be no more genial companion. His rare conversational powers, fund of anecdote, brilliant sallies of wit, and wise sayings upon the topic of the hour, made his company much sought, and many of these are the current coin of the circle in which he moved.

Mr. Stevens was an honest and truthful man in public and in private life. His word was sacred in letter and spirit, and was never paltered in a double sense. In money matters he was liberal to a fault, and out of his immense professional income he left but a meager estate. In his private charity he was lavish. He was incapable of saying no in the presence of want or misery. His charity, like his political convictions, regarded neither creed, race, nor color. He was a good classical scholar, and was well read in ancient and modern literature, especially on subjects of philosophy and law. In his old age he read but few books. Shakspeare, Dante, Homer, Milton, and the Bible could, however, generally be found upon the table in his sleeping room, where he was accustomed to read in bed. He was simple and temperate in his habits. He disliked the use of tobacco, and for forty years never used or admitted to his house intoxicating drinks except by direction of his physician.

Mr. Stevens was deeply loved and fully trusted by his constituents. He was often in advance of their views; sometimes he ran counter to their prejudices or passions; yet such was his popularity with them, so strong their faith in his wisdom, in the integrity of his action and the purity of his purpose that they never failed to sustain him. Popular with men of all parties, with his own supporters his name was a household word. To them, and among themselves, "Old Thad" was a phrase of endearment; while even his foes spoke of him with

Hosted by Google

pride as the "Great Commoner." No man ever died more deeply mourned by a constituency than Thaddeus Stevens.

Having briefly selected some of the incidents that marked the history of my friend, I will in conclusion say a few words of him on a subject in connection with which he is probably more widely known than any other—slavery. Mr. Stevens was always an anti-slavery man. From the time he left his native mountains to the moment of his death he was not only anti-slavery in the common acceptation of the term, but a bold, fearless, determined and uncompromising foe to oppression in any and every form. He was an abolitionist before there was such a party name.

His opposition to American slavery, no matter what his party connection, was never based upon mere questions of political economy. He always viewed it as a great wrong, at war with the fundamental principles of this and all good government, as a sin in the sight of God and a crime against man. For many years, long before it became popular to do so, he denounced this institution as the great crime of the nation, on the stump, at the forum, in party conventions and deliberative assemblies. On this question he was always in advance of his party, his State, and his constituents. Always resident in a border county, he defended the fugitive on all occasions, asserted the right of free speech, and stood between the abolitionist and the mob, often with peril to himself. This was one great cause of his having been so long in a minority, and of his entrance late in life into the councils of the nation; but for this he was fully compensated by living to see the destruction of an institution which he loathed, and by receiving for his reward, and as the crowning glory of his life, the blessings of millions he had so largely aided to make free.

The remains of Mr. Stevens lie in Lancaster, in a private cemetery established by an old friend, in a lot selected by him-

Hosted by Google

self, for reasons stated in the touching and beautiful epitaph prepared by himself for inscription upon his tomb:

I repose in this quiet and secluded spot, not from any natural preference for solitude, but finding other cemeteries limited by charter rules as to race, I have chosen it that I might be enabled to illustrate in my death the principles which I have advocated through a long life—equality of man before his Creator.

Let us trust and believe that if the earnest and sincere prayers of millions of the poor, downtrodden, and oppressed may smooth the pathway of the traveller on his journey from this world to the bourne of all, his has been a happy exit.

I offer the following resolutions:

Resolved, That this House has heard with deep regret the death of Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, a member of this House from the State of Pennsylvania.

Resolved, That as a testimony of respect to the memory of this distinguished statesman the officers and members of this House will wear the usual badge of mourning for the space of thirty days.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the family of the deceased by the Clerk.

Resolved, That this House, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, do now adjourn.

Remarks by Mr. Poland.

Mr. SPEAKER: I rise to second the resolutions offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania. The town of Danville, where Mr. Stevens was born, and the town of Peacham, in which he lived until he had completed his education and attained his majority, are both adjacent to the town where I reside, and form a part of the district I have the honor to represent. It seems appropriate that a representative of Mr. Stevens's native State and the representative of his native town and county should perform this duty, but I regret that it has fallen upon one who had so little personal knowledge of him. Mr. Stevens removed from Vermont to Pennsylvania before my birth, and I became a resident of his native county but a few years since, and after his youthful associates were nearly all gone. I met

Hosted by Google

him once or twice in Vermont when he came to visit his aged mother, but except this I never saw him until I came to the Senate at the beginning of the thirty-ninth Congress. Since I became a member of this House his advanced age and broken health prevented his active participation in much of its business, and for a great part of the time his attendance during its sessions. I can, therefore, do little more than express the general estimation of his public character and service entertained by myself in common with the people of his native State. I have learned that the parents of Mr. Stevens were poor, and that his education was mainly secured by his own energy and efforts. When he removed to the State of Pennsylvania to begin his career of active manhood he went among strangers, dependent for friends, for success in business, for professional or other advancement, for the means of living even, upon what he might, by force of his own unaided efforts and ability, be able to win. How hardly he struggled, how bravely he fought, how successfully he won friends, professional distinction, political advancement, name and fame, we have been told by his long-time friend and neighbor and successor in this House. His career and his success is another instance of what is so common in this country, but so uncommon in all others: the attainment of the highest professional and political distinction from the humblest condition by the mere force of personal effort and ability.

Mr. Stevens was another tribute to our system of free institutions, founded upon the equality of all men—institutions which he loved so well, and exerted himself so faithfully to extend and perpetuate. That Mr. Stevens was a man of marked ability has ever been conceded, as well by his political opponents as by his political and personal friends. He had indomitable courage, energy of character, and tenacious

Hosted by Google

will; so that when he had once settled upon a course of action he pursued it to the end with an apparent, almost reckless, disregard of the opinions and judgments of other men. His leading and characteristic ambition seemed to be to elevate the masses of his fellow-men. He seemed ever to desire and to labor that all men should have an equal start and a fair chance in the race of life. His early and successful efforts in his adopted State in the cause of popular and general education were an apt and enduring illustration of this great trait of his character. He loved freedom and liberty for himself, and for all men as well. He hated every form of tyranny and oppression which clogged and opposed the advancement of men to better conditions; and especially did he abhor and detest that vast oppression which once prevailed in this country and which seemed likely to prevail forever—human slavery. Accordingly, when that institution came to be one of the subjects of political controversy in the country, he was found among its most determined and advanced opponents. It is not saying more than I believe to be just to him that to his efforts as much as to those of any one man is the country indebted for its final overthrow. When the country had become involved in a civil war of appalling magnitude upon this question of slavery, and the great question of the time was whether the Union or slavery should go down, Mr. Stevens seemed to rise at once to the magnitude and majesty of the occasion.

His leadership of the Union men and opponents of slavery and its abettors during the period of the war, in the great American Commons, was perhaps as brilliant and successful as the world has ever seen. Though I have no reason to doubt he loved his country, its free institutions, and its government as well as others, I have thought his great efforts in their

Hosted by Google

behalf during that period were actuated as much by his hatred of slavery as by his love of country.

I will not further allude to Mr. Stevens's congressional career, though his public life is mainly included in it, but leave that to others whose opportunities to know it are so much better than my own. Mr. Stevens had very warm sympathies and great kindness of heart. No case of suffering or distress ever appealed to him in vain; his heart and his hand were always open to sympathize with and relieve the needy and the downtrodden of the earth.

I am aware that since the close of the war, in dealing with the subject of the restoration of the revolted States and their people, Mr. Stevens has been charged with entertaining malignant and uncharitable feelings, and being influenced by them in his public action. So far as this charge applies to the masses of the people of those States, who might well be regarded as the deluded victims of unwise leaders, I have never seen any evidence of its truth. He did regard the promoters and leaders of the rebellion as great criminals, who ought to be punished as such; he felt a kind of righteous and holy indignation against them, and as if the nation itself was endangered unless justice and judgment were meted out against them. Mr. Stevens always retained a strong feeling of attachment to his native State, and a very high regard for her people. It was a sufficient passport to his favor that the applicant came from Vermont. So long as his mother lived he made almost annual pilgrimages to the old home upon the Green mountains to see to her comfort and to visit the scenes of his boyhood. I do not think I ever met him since I have been in Washington but he inquired about something or somebody in Vermont, and almost always had some amusing anecdote to relate connected with his early life. His strong

Hosted by Google

filial affection is beautifully shown by the provision in his will for the annual planting of roses and other cheerful flowers at the corners of the graves of his mother and brother; and his attachment to the scenes and memories of his youthful days is equally well exhibited by his bequest to the Juvenile Library Association of the old Peacham Academy, where he received his preparatory education. The people of Vermont felt a just and laudable pride in Mr. Stevens and in his distinguished public career. They watched his success, as they have many others of her sons who have gone out from her and attained position and fame in other States. In the case of Mr. Stevens, his public course was generally such as commended itself to their own judgment. Sometimes he announced doctrines and advocated measures more extreme than they were prepared to accept; but they ever felt that for him something was to be pardoned to the spirit of liberty.

The people of Vermont always loved to believe that the strong love of freedom and independence for all men exhibited by him—his hatred of all forms of oppression, and his efforts to elevate and benefit the masses, were, to some extent, due to his being born in Vermont. The early history of Vermont was that of a continual struggle against what they deemed to be unlawful and unjust attempts of other States to obtain jurisdiction and exercise governmental power over them. These struggles had ceased, to be sure, prior to the birth of Mr. Stevens; but the heroes and statesmen who were her leaders in those trying days were still alive and gave tone and temper to public sentiment and opinion for many years after. We have loved to believe in Vermont that the free and independent opinions inhaled by him in his youth with the free air of our grand mountains in some degree contributed to make him what he was so emphatically, the friend of the oppressed and the foe of the oppressor. Like other

Hosted by Google

men, he had his faults; but he has done so much for the great cause of humanity that this and all future generations in this land have ample cause to bless and revere his memory. To show the estimate in which Mr. Stevens was held by the people of Vermont, I ask to have the Clerk read the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted by the Vermont legislature at their recent session.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Varnum, of Peacham, offered the following joint resolution:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives, That so great a loss to the nation as the death of Hon. THADDEUS STEVENS deserves, and should receive, of the representatives of the people of his native State in general assembly convened, a befitting and appropriate recognition.

Resolved, That we mourn and deeply sympathize with those of his adopted State, whom he so faithfully represented in the councils of our nation, and by whom he was so nobly sustained, in this their great bereavement and irreparable loss, of one so firm, so devoted to the interests, the welfare, and the honor of the people.

Resolved, That his patriotism, his devotion to the principles of liberty, justice, and equality, his unswerving fidelity to the trusts of his State and the trusts of the Union, have left an honorable and ineffaceable impression on the pages of history and on the records of a great Republic.

Resolved, That we will remember him as a son of Vermont, and will cherish his memory, and point with pride to his life as an example of patriotism for ourselves and our posterity.

Resolved, That the governor be requested to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the governor of Pennsylvania.

Remarks by Mr. Moorhead.

Mr. SPEAKER: My acquaintance with Thaddeus Stevens began during the administration of Governor Ritner, of Pennsylvania, about the year 1836. He was then a bold and daring leader of his party. Always in advance of public opinion, he constantly antagonized it with a valor and boldness unequalled. Usually political leaders ascertain the current and drift of public sentiment and accommodate themselves to it.

Hosted by Google

Not so with him. He formed his own opinions and acted on his own convictions. Opposition, so far from weakening his resolves, only nerved him for whatever effort was necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose. He created public opinion and moulded public sentiment. In this, above all other traits, lay the greatness of Thaddeus Stevens. He was always ready to defend his views, never shrinking from any service required by his fidelity to duty. The victims overthrown by his power and logic, and impaled by his wit, irony, and sarcasm, are legion. Many of them, like himself, have gone to their reward; others remain, retaining a lively recollection of the "Old Commoner."

While he was at times terribly severe, and more rarely discourteous, and sometimes in the intensity of political excitement wounded the feelings of his friends, yet at heart he was eminently kind, generous, and forgiving.

The history of his public life is before the world; his name and fame are a part of the possession of the people. While free government endures Thaddeus Stevens will be remembered with honor, and his services in its maintenance will be recalled with gratitude. But his greatest achievements were undoubtedly his agency in the establishment of the common school system of Pennsylvania, and in the emancipation of four million slaves. Both these great measures would undoubtedly have been adopted in time without him, but both were hastened by his strong and able support.

When, a member of the Pennsylvania legislature, in 1833, he commenced his public advocacy of free schools, many of our industrious, frugal, agricultural population believed that every man should take care of his own family and educate his children or not, as seemed to him best.

The idea of taxing one man to pay for schooling the children of another was looked upon by them as an innovation and an

Hosted by Google

injustice. His constituency held a meeting and instructed him to oppose the proposition. He boldly refused, denounced them for their selfishness, carried his measure, and also a majority of his constituents with him. The abolition of slavery is too recent, and his action too well known, not only to the people of the United States but of the world, to require any comment of mine. I cannot refrain, however, from saying that in 1850, being a visitor in this city, I obtained through the courtesy of a friend admittance to the floor of the House. Mr. Stevens was upon the floor at the time, speaking on the evils of slavery. The leading members from the slaveholding States were gathered in front of his desk. As he portrayed the degradation and crime of slavery in such a manner as he only could portray them, scowls settled upon their brows, contempt curled their lips, and oaths could be distinctly heard hissing through their teeth. This was in the days when southern gentlemen enforced their arguments with an appeal to the duel, and southern ruffians resorted to the bowie-knife and bludgeon. I felt alarmed for him, but he proceeded unembarrassed by interruptions and apparently unconscious of the mutterings of the storm. As, reaching his climax, he spoke of Virginia, the proud mother of Presidents, become a breeder of slaves for the southern market, the anger of her representatives could scarcely be restrained; yet he was as cool as if addressing a jury in his county court-house.

This conveniently illustrates the last remark I wish to make, namely, that Thaddeus Stevens was pre-eminently a brave man, who would do and dare everything in the vindication of what he believed to be the truth. But, Mr. Speaker, he is gone; peace be to his ashes. Vermont has the honor of his birth, Pennsylvania the more enduring honor of having adopted him as her son; for were not her valleys his home, her temples of justice his shrine, her legislative halls his first

Hosted by Google

political prize, her people his constituents, her interests his study, her progress his delight, her honor his glory, and is not her soil his grave? Let us imitate his virtues and cherish his memory.

Remarks by Mr. Maynard.

In the awful presence of death every voice is silent except the voice of sorrow and eulogy. The infirmities of mortality are forgotten, the good alone is remembered; criticism is disarmed; censure loses its power; men instinctively concede, as they expect, this sad immunity to the grave. It is, let us believe, an unconscious prefiguration of the better life to come.

While offering my tribute to the memory of our venerable and deceased associate, the late Thaddeus Stevens, it is proper that I confine myself to that portion of his life spent in the national Capitol. Others knew him, it may be, as a student, a teacher, a lawyer, a neighbor—knew him in the amenities and benefactions of home. My acquaintance with him was formed here, and here, I may say in this building, was our intercourse. I met him the first time at the assembling of the thirty-sixth Congress, in the winter of 1859. It was a period of great political excitement. The struggle had already begun which within less than two years developed into civil war. It was a time to call forth the best efforts of the best men. Members then of different political parties, we naturally, necessarily perhaps, pursued what was felt to be a common purpose by different methods and distinct organizations. The scenes of that Congress are not easily forgotten. The almost daily contests between Lovejoy and Corwin and Stevens on the one side, and Hindman and Barksdale and Branch on the other, speaking alone of the dead, but settled the issues for the com-

Hosted by Google

ing years of bloodshed and carnage. Some of us, foreseeing the calamitous time, interposed to stay the strife, praying that if it were possible this cup of sorrow might pass. Visions of desolated homes, of screaming women, famishing children, and old men, the victims of torture; fields laid waste, and all that makes existence lovely perverted—visions frightfully realized—were ever present before us whose people occupied what we knew must be the battle-ground in case of armed conflict. To avert this terrible visitation I need not say we labored with all the earnestness of agonizing natures. The records remain to tell of our labors. I refer to them at this time and in this connection to attest the feeling of confidence we entertained toward Mr. Stephens. Armed though he was in completest panoply, and ready for every encounter, we all felt that if war should ensue it would not be his generous nature which would strike the first blow. This is not the occasion to dwell upon the remembered incidents of his intercourse with my associates—still speaking alone of the dead—with Gilmer, of North Carolina; Bouligny, of Louisiana; Bristow and Anderson, of Kentucky; and Brabson and Hatton, of my own State. It was not the intercourse of men who expected soon to become enemies. So we separated at the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln full of anxiety, yet not without hope.

When, the next winter, we met again as members of a new Congress, all was changed. A million of men were in arms, and the life of the nation hung upon the issue of battles. We were both upon the Committee of Ways and Means, charged, as the House was at that time organized, with the examination of all financial questions, both of revenue and expenditure, and with the preparation of all revenue bills, which, under the Constitution, must originate in this House. The expenditures of the government, never less than two millions a day, and sometimes reaching three millions, made a demand upon the

Hosted by Google

public resources wholly without precedent and greatly beyond what many regarded our ability to meet. Besides, intervention by at least two of the great European powers for months seemed imminent, and a struggle between the republic and the united civilized world. And, what was still more disheartening to one in the position of Mr. Stevens, he lacked confidence in the ability and skill both of our civil and military leaders, and in some important instances he had little faith in their devotion to the cause so dear to the general heart. The early decisions of the field were not always assuring, and even here there were not a few, timid and unbelieving, ready to flee at the first sign of irresolution on the part of our leader. Yet neither on the floor nor in the committee room did his courage once weaken or his purpose grow infirm. On the contrary, we saw his energies increase with every new emergency, and his spirit rise buoyant as those around him became more desponding. Among the elements of our final success his unfaltering leadership at this cardinal period was not the least. While events were shaping themselves and the public judgment was baffled by the novelty of the situation, weakness, doubt, instability in that quarter would have been disastrous, might have been fatal. The unabated hostility towards him by the partizans of the rebellion is explained only by their consciousness of his unyielding and overmastering power.

The internal revenue system, the currency system, the national bank system, the form of the national debt originated at this juncture and under his direction. In no instance, I believe, did his individual views entirely prevail, and there were points upon which he was diametrically opposed by the action of the two houses. Having known his opinions at that time, I could easily appreciate his feeling of injustice at the construction afterward given to certain scattered expressions,

Hosted by Google

used, possibly, in reference to the predominant sentiments of others rather than to his own.

His subsequent career is too recent and too familiar to be dwelt upon. His theory of the rebellion and of the legal consequences of its overthrow, his views upon reconstruction, and the part he took in the late contest for precedence between the legislature and the executive are well understood. During the last year we all felt that his sands had nearly run; day by day we saw him borne into the hall upon the arms of young men, weak as a child, but eager and attentive, whether the discussion turned upon foreign or home affairs. No subject was above his grasp, none beneath his notice. Treaty stipulations with a great power and the salary of the humblest clerk alike found in him an advocate. Toward the close of the summer session nature made a final rally. For a few days the old vivacity returned—the brilliant repartee and unexpected sallies that all enjoyed so much. He himself felt the renewal of strength and a revival of hope and the future. It was the last glimmer of the expiring flame. We had scarcely dispersed to our distant homes before the telegraph announced that he was no more. And so he passed away in the mellow autumn of his age, having lived to enjoy the ripened fruits of the spring-time planting and summer culture.

A maxim of one of the sages would have us wait until the end of life before pronouncing it happy. A historian, closing the biography of one of the illustrious men of his time, exclaims, in the spirit of this maxim, "*Tu vero felix, non vitæ tantum claritate, sed etiam opportunitate mortis.*" If a brilliant career be a happy one, and if that career be brilliant, which, unaided by wealth, family or powerful friends, attains the front rank among the great leaders of a great epoch and makes a name for ban or blessing in every household of the land, then, indeed, is this champion of the oppressed to be

Hosted by Google

accounted happy; but thrice happy in the opportune article of his death. Though the strength of manhood was gone, the babble and drivel of dotage had not supervened. He had seen his country emerge, after a long and painful strife, from the clouds and turmoil of civil war, and resume her place among the nations, freer, richer, stronger, happier, and more honored than before; entering upon a new era of prosperity and growth, excelling them all in the splendor of her renown, even as one star excelleth another star in glory. The principles for which he had contended through a lengthened life had been recognized and adopted. His life-work was done, and who shall say it had not been done well? The Son of David has said there is a time to die; a time when to die is better than to live; and fortunate are they who are summoned at this auspicious moment, permitted to attain the full measure of their fame, but not to survive their reputation or their usefulness to mankind.

The character of Mr. Stevens I shall not attempt. To his life-long friends its delineation will be a work of pathetic pride; I leave it to them, remarking upon two traits which seemed very prominent. The first was manliness as opposed to effeminacy. Not his

> "The Dorian mood
> Of flutes and soft recorders."

He evinced little respect for mere taste and refinement and delicacy and luxury and sentiment and the whole chapter of exquisitism, but delighted rather in the sturdier qualities of the heart and mind. The other trait was his exceeding liberality, extending alike to all, to the unthankful and the evil as well as to the grateful and the deserving. Where could be found a more unselfish friend? And never, surely, was there a more generous foe. Oppression and distress never appealed to him in vain. The humblest obscurity did not escape his

Hosted by Google

notice. Opposition to slavery was a moral necessity of his nature. As a legislator he was liberal to such a degree that his political associates deemed it necessary to provide a counterpoise in natures less impulsive and sympathetic. His last effort in the House, if I mistake not, was an appeal for an appropriation to the public charities of the District of Columbia. Those who knew him in the private walks of life bear testimony to his own continual and abounding charity, and "charity shall cover the multitude of sins." We cannot wonder, therefore, that pious hands were there to close his dying eyes, making intercession with Heaven in his behalf, or that in the supreme hour devoted women should administer the holy chrism, efficacious, let us hope, beyond the teaching of our creeds.

To most men there comes, sooner or later, a period of inaction, inability for further progress; when the world seems to them incapable of becoming any better, and every change is dreaded as likely to be for the worse. This is the period of conservatism, and usually comes with gray hairs and failing eye-sight. It converses with the past and distrusts the future. Its look is backward and not forward. This period Mr. Stevens never reached. No good was ever attained without an attainable better. All his life he held the outposts of thought. Even in his closing hours, we are told, he found time for discourse of hopeful temper upon public affairs and to augur the success of an administration he could hardly have expected to see.

As he was, so he will long be remembered. He has left his impress upon the form and body of the times. Monuments will be reared to perpetuate his name on the earth. Art will be busy with her chisel and her pencil to preserve his features and the image of his mortal frame. All will be done that brass and marble and painted canvas admit of being

Hosted by Google

done. The records of his official acts will remain in your archives; our chosen words of commemoration will fall into the channels of literature. But the influence of a gifted mind in moulding thought and giving direction to events is not to be measured by words of commemoration or by official records. It is as measureless as the soul and enduring as time. Long after the brass and marble and painted canvas have disappeared it will still remain, transmitted from age to age and through successive generations. "*Quidquid ex eo amavimus, quidquid mirati sumus, manet, mansurumque est in animis hominum, in æternitate temporum, fama rerum. Posteritati, narratus et traditus, superstes erit.*"

Remarks by Mr. Kelley.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thaddeus Stevens was one of the most practical of men, though his whole life was colored and influenced by a vision. Timid men, and those who were without faith, called him dogmatic and impracticable, and others spoke of him as a theorist, who, to gratify a malignant or vindictive spirit, urged extreme measures regardless of the rights, interests, or sentiments of those they were to affect. They knew but little of the man they judged. How thoroughly practical he was is attested by the fact that he earned by teaching the rudimentary branches the means to procure his collegiate training; that having settled in a community in which hereditary wealth was deemed a prerequisite to a respectable position at the bar, he made no concealment of his poverty, and taught school while preparing for the practice of the legal profession and the acknowledged leadership of the bar of a large section of his adopted State; that he commanded the confidence of every judge before whom he appeared in his extended

Hosted by Google

range of practice, and secured the affectionate regard of all his young professional brethren; by the frequency with which the people among whom he settled, whether of the York, the Adams, or the Lancaster district, required him, at whatever sacrifice of prejudice on their part or of pecuniary interest on his, to represent them in the legislatures of the State and nation, and conventions summoned for the consideration of the gravest topics; and, above all, by the commanding influence he exercised in every deliberative assembly of which he was a member.

I heard a prominent member of the 38th Congress say of Mr. Stevens: "Let him go in what direction he may, it is always to the extreme;" implying waywardness and inconsistency, and, in so far, misjudging him. He never labored in adverse directions. He sometimes accepted and supported propositions which were in general accord with his views, but to which he could not yield unqualified assent. He did this, as he once said, "because Congress is composed of men, and not of angels." He was incapable of acting inconsistently upon measures involving general principles. Against this reproach he was almost divinely panoplied. He had in his boyhood dreamed of a republic broader, grander, and more beneficent than the republic of Plato or the Utopia of Sir Thomas More—a republic in which every citizen might know the chastening influence of the family relations and the joys of home and pursue the secrets of science and the pleasures of literature; and believing, as he continued to do, in the progress of our race and the perfectibility of our institutions, his public life was devoted to the realization of this, his boyhood's beautiful dream. When he dedicated himself to this work, in which he never faltered, the southern boundary of our country was near the 31st degree of latitude, and the course of the Mississippi defined its western limits; but he

Hosted by Google

believed that the inspiring truths expressed in the Declaration of Independence, and embodied in our State and federal constitutions, would regenerate all the governments on the continent.

At the time of his birth the mouth of the Mississippi and the shores of the Gulf of Mexico were under the dominion of foreign potentates. He was, however, old enough to understand and remember the discussion that attended our first acquisition of territory—the Louisiana purchase—which extended from the Gulf along the west bank of the Mississippi to the Lake of the Woods; and though sometimes disapproving of the means by which they were gained, he welcomed each of the several acquisitions of territory by which our country has come to stretch from ocean to ocean, to have a longer and more valuable coast line on the Pacific than any other nation, and to encircle the Gulf from Cape Sable to the Rio Grande. Every successive acquisition confirmed his faith and nerved his purpose.

The theory of Mr. Stevens's ideal republic awarded home and culture to each industrious citizen. With this generous theory slavery was incompatible, and he was, consequently, the sworn and unrelenting foe of that accursed institution. He did not wage war upon slavery because he envied the wealth and power of the master. He was wont to thank God for having blessed his youth with poverty, and was ever ready to confront the haughty master because his great heart sympathized with the outraged and helpless slave.

The severance of the Union would have dispelled Mr. Stevens's faith in the ultimate redemption of the laboring people of the world from the ignorance and ill-paid toil to which they have ever been subjected. The breaking out of the slaveholders' rebellion seemed to rejuvenate him and inspire him with superhuman strength. He was always in his seat;

Hosted by Google

and when sessions were so far protracted, as they sometimes were during the 37th, 38th, and 39th Congresses, that daylight came and dimmed the artificial light in this hall, the old man's pungent witticisms would rouse many of the younger members from drowsiness and prostration. To maintain the Union he would have exhausted the country's resources in men and materials of war; and when the rebellion had been crushed he proposed measures that, had they been adopted, would have eradicated its cause and rendered its recurrence impossible.

He did not propose confiscation as a punishment to those whose great crime merited it. He was incapable of a vindictive act. He regarded the system of land monopoly, which had prevailed in the south, as the essential support of slavery, and he would obliterate it. He knew that the rebel leaders were conquered but not subdued, and appreciating the power they derived from the ownership of the land on which the body of the people were to labor and live, he would deprive them of that power. He knew that the labor of the slave had given the land of the south its value, and he would reward the freedman by giving him a homestead as a slight return for the unrequited work he had done while a slave. He knew that the loyal soldier had saved the south to the Union and freedom, and he would invite him to dwell under his own vine in its midst, and by his counsels assist in its future government. He knew that a landed aristocracy and a landless class are alike dangerous in a republic, and by a single act of justice he would abolish both. Such were the humane considerations which prompted him to propose and support measures which the weak and time-serving denounced as harsh and vindictive.

The system of labor for wages, as it is exemplified in Great Britain and on the Continent, is as inconsistent with his ideal republic as slavery. Contemplating the ever-increasing volume of pauperism in the British islands, and the unnatural

Hosted by Google

and excessive toil demanded from women in the coal mines of England and Belgium, and from tender children of agricultural laborers in the fen-gangs of England, his emotions might have been expressed in the indignant exclamation of the Abbe de la Mennais, "But for labor at wages there is no name out of hell." That is not the freedom of which he had dreamed, which deprives childhood of its buoyancy, home of its charms, and supplants intelligent and sturdy youth by ignorance and premature decrepitude, or binds the families of laborious artisans to a given locality by their interest in the parish poor rates, or such inadequate wages as preclude the possibility of saving a sum sufficient for their own transportation to better markets for their labor.

Mr. Stevens always believed that fidelity to republican principles required government to protect those whose toil is the source of all prosperity against the wrongs and woes endured by the laboring people of countries in which social distinctions are recognized by law, and ancient evils are regarded as vested rights; and with what steadiness and power he endeavored to protect the wages of the American workman, by the imposition of adequate duties on the productions of the under-paid laborers of Europe, every gentleman on this floor knows. But he was no foe to commerce. In the republic his youthful imagination pictured nature lent all her aids to the people. The fields gave forth rich harvests; the mines yielded their precious or useful stores; and each mountain stream, as it sped its way to the sea, lightened the burden of man by moving machinery which he guided without exhausting labor. The consumer and the producer were neighbors, the most perfect means of transportation facilitated exchanges of commodities, and the taxes imposed by middle men and the many agents required by trade with distant nations were saved to the producer.

Hosted by Google

Whether in the legislature of Pennsylvania or the Congress of the United States, no project for the development of latent resources or improved transportation that came within his conception of constitutional limits ever failed for the want of his support. In view of our almost limitless range of climate and soil, and boundless and diversified agricultural and mineral resources, he regarded our country as sufficient not only for its present population, but for hundreds of millions of people in the enjoyment of every material comfort and the refinements of a better than Augustan age. Regarding our country as the refuge of all who could flee from the inequalities of other lands, and the intelligence of the people as essential to the perpetuity of our institutions, he held it to be the primary duty of the State to insure the proficiency of every child in "orthography, reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic, which, by the experience of the world, are pronounced to be the rudimental branches of all knowledge." He would not consent to withhold the privileges of an elector from a man because he was illiterate, and thus punish him because the State had not done its duty by him in childhood; but he proposed that the government should provide school-houses, teachers, and other appliances for the education of all children, and then further enact "that no father or guardian shall be permitted to vote at any election for any public officer who shall not have caused at least one-half of the number of his children or wards, between the ages of five and fifteen years, or if he have but one, that one, to attend school during at least eight months within each of the years they are entitled to attend school."

To those who believe that the thing that has been is the the thing that shall be forever, and that that youthful giant, the American Republic, shall never escape from the leading-strings in which he has consented to be held by those bed-rid-

Hosted by Google

den hags, the monarchies of Europe, these theories of Mr. Stevens, doubtless, sound like the ravings of one bereft of reason. But those who know the attractive influence of power, and that the theatre of our action is a virgin continent, with lakes, rivers, and coast lines capable of accommodating in our internal or domestic commerce a commercial marine far greater than that which now carries the commerce of the world, will regard them as the sure prophesy of the future that is before us. Mr. Stevens believed in the possibility of the commercial independence of the United States. He also knew that when that should be achieved the people could bring their domestic relations into harmony with the fundamental ideas of their republican government. Wise men will not think of him as a visionary because he anticipated coming events and proposed beneficent changes before the public mind was ripe for their reception. A great truth bravely uttered is never inopportune. Nor do time and age blunt the aptness of such utterances; and the advanced propositions and fervid words with which Thaddeus Stevens so often stirred our blood and swayed our judgment will shape the future of the country. When the age is riper other lips will echo them with persuasive and conclusive force. Then the American people, instead of asking the little nationalities of Europe what they may do, will dictate the internal policy those nations must adopt on pain of seeing their most valuable citizens, allured by our happier condition, come to swell the power and grandeur of the great republic. Then will his dream be fulfilled, and then will the world behold the fitting monument of Pennsylvania's greatest statesman, Thaddeus Stevens.

Hosted by Google

Remarks by Mr. Wood.

Mr. SPEAKER, I feel no embarrassment in rising to unite my voice with those who thus appropriately pay this last public tribute of respect to the memory of our late distinguished associate. The wide divergence in opinion between us on the leading questions of the times cannot deter me from the expression of a just homage to his character as a man, whether considered as a citizen or as a statesman.

As when living we recognized him as one of the foremost intellects in this House, so now, that being dead, let us forget the controversies which divided us and remember only the higher qualities and personal attributes which have at all times commanded our attention.

The great poet has said:

> "The evil that men do lives after them:
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

Would that the reverse of this was true, so that the ill which men do should be buried with their bones, that the good, and the good only, will live after them.

Mr. Speaker, this is, indeed, an interesting occasion, not only in the performance of these rites and the personal remembrances it recalls, but in the contemplations and reflections it involuntarily forces upon the mind. It has been said that the disappointments in life are many and the successes tragically few. While this may apply to men in the aggregate, history and observation teach that the special man may make conquests from time, surmounting difficulties, and attain the objects of his ambition. The sorrows, the trials, and tribulations of the general man result from the confidence reposed in and the deferred hopes of the eternal to-morrow; while the triumphs of the special man may infallibly be traced to his earnest action in the ever-living present—in the realities of to-day! Time is always capricious and often

Hosted by Google

deceitful! To the youthful it is full of hope and golden promise. In the aged it fosters those fond anticipations, but prolongs their realization; and while human expectation is most sanguine, it coquets with our hopes, and, it may be, flits from our grasp.

The force and reason of these remarks are happily illustrated by the life and example of that exalted citizen whose memory we now celebrate, to whose intellect and personal worth we now pay homage. With him there was no to-morrow in life. He was truthful to his instincts, to his nature, and his public career displayed the increasing activity of an ever-present to-day.

Mr. Stevens was a man of rare natural mental power, which, together with much self-reliance and entire independence of character, rendered him at once the formidable and successful leader. He relied upon these qualities more than upon the common resources of inferior men who yield to the errors and prejudices of the times rather than suffer defeat. Himself a man of conviction, but not of policy, he despised those who sacrificed the former to the latter.

A bold thinker, and yet bolder actor, he had no patience with those who have no higher idea of the noble profession of politics than to obtain success by any means and at every hazard. Of a self-reliant temperament, he would not conform to the prevailing conventionalism of the day. He was a candid man. Whatever mistakes of judgment the world may attribute to him, they were not assumed for a purpose. Caring little for popular favor or prejudice, he pursued the even tenor of his way, enforcing the doctrines he advocated with an earnestness and power which no man could have done who did not himself earnestly and honestly believe them to be right. He utterly contemned deception and hypocrisy. Those of us who served with him on committees, and who were brought into

Hosted by Google

requent personal intercourse with him, will bear testimony to the frankness and manliness of his bearing. Though tenacious in adhering to his own view, he granted the largest indulgence to the views of others in the discussions in this House.

Well, indeed, may it be said of him that he was a special man, an embodiment of original personal individuality. Whether his influence was exercised for the good of his country this is not the occasion to discuss, nor can it be supposed that the present moment can well decide. Identified with the present revolutionary era, in which he was one of the chief revolutionists and most prominent leaders, time, and time only, can determine whether the talents and characteristics to which I have referred were of injury or benefit to his country. In my judgment, this generation will not survive their unfortunate influence. Be that as it may, he is gone—and gone forever. He has passed to

> "The undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
> No traveller returns."

That he has left his impress upon the present page of history none can dispute; that he possessed many manly qualities none can deny; that he was a thoroughly honest, as well as a truly great man, all will admit. Let us pass him to the grave as we hope others will pass ourselves—forgetting the frailties incident to our natures, and which appear to be inseparably connected with our being.

Remarks by Mr. Broomall.

Mr. SPEAKER: Few statesmen of any country have maintained throughout a long public life the steadfast adherence to principles laid down in early manhood which characterized Thaddeus Stevens. Universal education, equality of human rights, the elevation of the weak, the poor, and the oppressed were not more ardent aims and objects to him when he first

Hosted by Google

espoused the cause of human progress than when three-quarters of a century had rendered his infirm body an ill match for his still young and vigorous mind.

Too frequently in men of all stations the generous impulses and noble sentiments of youth give place, with advancing years and prosperity, to that fossil petrefaction of humanity called conservatism, which is nothing more than the want of ability to see the line of progress marked out by the hand of Omnipotence and the want of energy to follow it. But this dry rot of the soul never tainted Thaddeus Stevens. One of the last acts of his old age was the preparation of a plan for thorough and universal education in the District of Columbia, and among the first of his early manhood was the patronage, almost the parentage, of the common school system of Pennsylvania. Those who have heard him within a year, and when he required support to stand, denounce, as we know how he could denounce, the bare suggestion of reconstructing the south without providing for universal suffrage, are irresistibly carried back to the period long years before when he stood up, almost alone, in the constitutional convention of his adopted State, the advocate of the cause of self-government against those who found it prudent silently to outvote the man they did not dare to answer. In contrasting the two pictures the mind is led to believe and to wonder that in the lapse of thirty years the man had grown no older.

His conduct in that convention is a lesson to the young statesmen of his country. The cause of universal suffrage which he espoused was then an unpopular one, and there seemed little prospect of its ever being otherwise. The slaveholders of the south had long seen that if the voice of the black man could be heard in the north their hold upon their human chattels would in time become insecure. With their usual sagacity they had induced northern politicians by flattery

Hosted by Google

and patronage to enter their services as voluntary bondsmen. These bondsmen had created a public sentiment in the north which assigned to the black man a condition something between man and brute, or rather a condition sometimes the one and sometimes the other, as best suited their southern masters: man as an element of political power in his owner, man for the purposes of accountability and punishment, brute for all other purposes.

When the Pennsylvania convention of 1838 sat, this public sentiment was at its height, and that body was made up, to a large extent, of these voluntary bondsmen. True to their vassalage they hastened to record their servility to the slave power by silencing, as they believed forever, the voice and the vote of the black man in the councils of the State. They thought it safe to do this. The victims were the few, the poor, and the powerless. It was in vain that Stevens and those who felt with him protested against the shame and the wrong. The deed was done. Thousands of American citizens were disfranchised; and that, too, upon the spot where Penn, a century and a half before, had founded the purest system of self-government the world up to that time had ever witnessed; upon the spot where the fathers of the revolution sixty years before had declared that all men are born free and equal, and had bound themselves by the most solemn obligation to write that holy sentence upon American annals with their blood. But when the work of the convention was complete, and the organic law came to be signed by the members, he who had done so much to make it in other respects what it is, refused to give it the sanction of his name, and to this day the constitution of 1838 remains in the archives of Pennsylvania with one vacant seal.

Yet the man whose name should be there lived to aid in abolishing the institution in whose interests Pennsylvania had

Hosted by Google

sacrificed her honor, and to see universal suffrage made the cardinal principle of American institutions. That missing name will be remembered with gratitude when the names and principles of those who so degraded their State have long been consigned to merited oblivion. Let the future statesmen of America learn that it is never safe to do wrong. Retributive justice is sometimes slow, but it is always sure.

The memory of Thaddeus Stevens needs no monument. The imprint of his mind is upon the history of his country, and is more ineffaceable there than would be the image of his body upon marble. He was among the first to see that the contest into which we were forced in 1861 was war, not mere insurrection to be suppressed in sixty days, and that it must end in victory upon one side or the other with all its rights and disabilities. When that contest was at last over he was among the first to see that all civil relations pre-existing between the victors and the vanquished had ceased to be, leaving the latter wholly without civil government. Brushing away the ingenious sophistries with which a faithless administration sought to bewilder the public mind in the interests of a fallen institution, he set about the work of reconstructing the conquered country in the interests of loyalty, progress, and the rights of man. To him more than to any other single individual is attributable the fact that eight States of the Union have been organized upon the basis of universal suffrage and three more are about to be. As long as self-goverement shall remain a principle dear to the American heart, Thaddeus Stevens will be remembered as its great champion. He needs no monument, yet Pennsylvania owes a tribute to her departed statesman. The time will come, and that speedily, when she will purge her organic law of all traces of the unhallowed institution, all evidences of her former vassalage. From a human stand-point it would seem that Thaddeus Stevens should have

Hosted by Google

witnessed that event; but it suited the purposes of an Inscrutable Power to decree otherwise. Let his beloved State do for him what he did not live to do for himself. When that day comes let the Governor of Pennsylvania, by virtue of a solemn act of her legislature, on some day sacred to the cause of humanity, in the presence of all that is great and good within her borders, take from her archives the constitution of 1838, and reverently, with humiliation for the past and hope for the future, blot out forever the discrimination between man and man which God never made, and opposite the vacant seal write the name of Thaddeus Stevens. Then will be accomplished what he lived for. Then will Pennsylvania be worthy to account him among the sons she has loved, honored, and mourned.

I cannot conclude the few remarks I arose to offer better than by quoting the language of my deceased colleague himself, in this hall, upon the announcement of the death of Mr. Noell, of Missouri, whom he knew and with whom he sympathized:

> Other men more eloquent than he may have been called to the bar of judgment, but no man ever appeared before that dread tribunal with more numerous and ardent advocates. His advocates were the oppressed of every nation, the crushed of the satanic institution of slavery.
>
> Who would not rather take his chance in the great day of accounts, before that Judge who is the acknowledged Father of all men, than the chance of ordained hypocrites, miserable wretches who, professing to hold a commission from on high, impiously proclaim slavery a divine institution?

Remarks by Mr. Ashley.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the death of Thaddeus Stevens this House has lost one of its recognized leaders, and the nation one of her most distinguished sons. In his departure we shall miss another of the uncompromising heroes of our anti-slavery revolution. Elijah and Owen Lovejoy are entombed; the one at Alton, and the other at Princeton, Illinois. Adams and Pierpont sleep beneath the soil of their native Massachusetts;

Hosted by Google

Theodore Parker at Florence, in Italy; William Leggett at New Rochelle, New York; Nathaniel P. Rogers by his native Merrimac; Gamaliel Bailey within the shadow of the national Capitol; Giddings and Morris and Lewis in Ohio; James G. Birney in New Jersey; David Wilmot and James Mott in Pennsylvania; John Brown at North Elba, New York; and there are others whose lives were as heroic and beautiful and unselfish, whose names I do not now recall. To these must be added more than 300,000, the fallen heroes and martyrs of our liberating army, who sleep on every national battle-field from the heights of Gettysburg to the banks of the Rio Grande. Pre-eminent among all this invincible army of heroes, prophets, and martyrs is Abraham Lincoln,

The generous, merciful, and just.

With this grand army of unselfish patriots, his contemporaries and colaborers, we have laid down to rest all that is mortal of our friend in the bosom of his beloved Pennsylvania.

The benediction of millions followed him to his tomb, and to-day in the free home of every black man, and of all men who love liberty, there is sincere sorrow and mourning.

Never again in these council halls will he deliberate with the people's representatives, nor awaken the nation from its lethargy by his genius and wonderful power.

The honorable gentleman whom his constituents have elected to succeed him on this floor, and those who have preceded me, have spoken so fully of his early life, his heroic struggles, and his personal history, that I need not add a single word.

Through some of the most eventful years in our history I have been intimately associated with him on this floor. During all that time, which included the darkest hours in the nation's life—hours which tested the constancy and courage of men—he bore himself with such unquestioned fidelity to the cause

Hosted by Google

of human freedom as to command even the respect of political opponents and the cordial endorsement of all liberty-loving men.

As we engage in the memorial services of this hour, and bear him again in our hearts from this Capitol and the scenes of his struggles and wonderful triumphs, let the nation stand with uncovered head and its bells peal forth the solemn sound of an anthem more appropriate than any words of mine:

Toll! Toll! Toll!
All mortal life must end.
Toll! Toll! Toll!
Weep for the nation's friend.
Oh! the land he loved will miss him,
Miss him in its hour of need;
Mourns the nation for the nation,
Till its tear-drops inward bleed.
Let bands of mourning drape the homestead,
And the sacred house of prayer;
Let mourning folds lay black and heavy
On true bosoms everywhere!
Toll! Toll! Toll!
Never again—no more—
Comes back to earth the life that goes
Hence to the Eden shore!
Let him rest! it is not often
That his soul hath known repose.
Let him rest!—they rest but seldom
Whose successes challenge foes.
He was weary, worn with watching,
His life-crown of power hath pressed
Oft on temples sadly aching—
He was weary: let him rest!
Toll, bells at the Capitol,
Bells of the land, toll!
Sob out your grief with brazen lungs,
Toll! Toll! Toll!

Mr. Speaker, though death come never so often, he casts at the portals of the tomb shadows ever new and mysterious, and ever and always hath for the living his admonitions and his lessons.

By the side of the grave we all realize that there are voices whispering to us out of the shadowy silence beyond the river.

Hosted by Google

In such an hour we see with the natural eye "as through a glass, darkly," but we have the promise that if faithful we shall see "face to face." As there is no race of men without the idea of a God and a future life, so in the presence of death it is natural for all to pause and think of the life beyond.

What is to be the destiny of our friend in "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns," it is wisely not given us to know. Let us hope that he has gone up into the presence of the God of nations and of men bearing in his hands some of the broken fetters which have fallen from the limbs of our 4,000,000 emancipated bondsmen. These shall testify of his fidelity to justice and to his love of the human race.

In that great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, I trust it may be said to him by the Father of all, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And that it will be said I may without presumption hope, for whatever may be the theories of men, whatever our hope for ourselves or for others in the life which never dies, let us trust that better than all our faiths, and more comprehensive than our grandest conceptions, an all-wise Creator has ordained a plan as broad as the universe, and as just as it is infinite, which will compensate in the future life every soul which has struggled and suffered for mankind in this.

Mr. Speaker, there are moments in the experiences of all when we cannot convey to other hearts the emotions of our own. To me such a moment is the present. So many reminiscences are crowding upon me, and so many wonderful scenes in which our departed friend was an actor are passing as a panorama before me, that I feel how short I should come of doing them or him justice were I to dwell upon them. No man who loves his country and passed through those scenes

Hosted by Google

in these halls can ever forget them. When I first entered this House, ten years ago, Mr. Stevens was one of the first to take me by the hand and welcome me. From that day until the day of his death he was my friend, and often my adviser and counsellor. However often I may have differed with him—as I often did—there was one question about which we never differed: the question of the necessity of the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery. Of the practicability and justice of destroying slavery he never doubted. I am thankful that he was spared to witness the end of that indescribable villainy. I rejoice to know that as the gates of the Eternal World opened up before him he was permitted to look back upon the land he loved and nowhere behold the footprints of a single slave. Because of his unwavering fidelity to the poor bondsmen, who, in the presence of a nation of oppressors, were manacled and powerless and dumb, I came to venerate him; and because I venerated him I come to-day to cast a garland upon his tomb. In this selfish world there is nothing which so strongly enlists my sympathies and so much commands my admiration as a heroic and unselfish life spent in the interests of mankind. To me it is the most touching and beautiful of all human struggles.

In espousing the cause of the slave, more than forty years ago, Mr. Stevens voluntarily accepted social and political ostracism, and patiently endured the persecutions of ignorant and maddened men, for whose highest good he was laboring. He did this without fee or hope of political reward, simply because he believed it to be right; and because he was right we shall some day see the children of the men who stoned him gladly join hands with the liberated slave in bearing back the stones, in the shape of blocks of whitest marble, with which to build his monument.

I do not assume to write his epitaph. In a speech deliv-

Hosted by Google

ered in this House January 13, 1865, he said, (I read from volume 54 of the Globe, page 266:)

I will be satisfied if my epitaph shall be written thus: "Here lies one who never rose to any eminence, and who only courted the low ambition to have it said that he had striven to ameliorate the condition of the poor, the lowly, the downtrodden of every race and language and color."

The grand blows which he struck in his great battle for liberty and justice will long survive him and leave their impress upon all lands, strengthening the purpose of the toiling and struggling millions of earth. His successful life-battle should teach us the value and self-sustaining power of a life consecrated to the best interests of his country and his fellow-men.

In this impressive hour, while reviewing his heroic and unselfish acts, let us renew our vows of fidelity to the great principles which he so long, so ably, and so faithfully maintained. Let us here, and now, pledge our lives anew to the cause of human liberty and human progress, resolving that no obstacle nor selfish interest shall cause us to falter, so that when we descend to the tomb the benedictions of mankind shall bless us, as they now bless him for whom we mourn, and it shall be said of us as it is now said of him:

He hath not lived in vain.

After a long and stormy battle, with a record which the friends of freedom will ever cherish, full of years and crowned with honors, he—

"Has gone from this strange world of ours,
No more to gather its thorns with its flowers;
No more to linger where sunbeams must fade;
Where, on all beauty, death's fingers are laid.
Weary with mingling life's bitter and sweet;
Weary with parting and never to meet.
Weary with sowing and never to reap;
Weary with labor and welcoming sleep.
In Christ may he rest," from sorrow and sin
Happy, where earth's conflicts enter not in.

Hosted by Google

Remarks by Mr. Miller.

Mr. SPEAKER: During the recess of Congress my venerable colleague, Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, of the ninth district, passed from the turmoils of life to the peace and quiet of the tomb. He was participating with us in legislation when we adjourned on the 27th of July last, and although he was enfeebled in bodily health, I joined with many others in an earnest hope that he would be spared to meet with us when we again assembled here for the transaction of business. The realization of that hope has not been vouchsafed to us. On the 12th of August last, at one o'clock a. m., at his temporary residence within a short distance from the Capitol, he died.

Thaddeus Stevens was born on the 4th of April, 1792, in the town of Danville, Caledonia county, Vermont. The pecuniary circumstances of his parents being limited, they were unable to furnish means for his education. Animated with a purpose to succeed, through his own perseverance and energy he was successful in acquiring a liberal education. Upon the completion of his collegiate course he bid adieu to his native State and home, and in the year 1814, at the age of 22, reached the borough of York, Pennsylvania. Teaching school for a livelihood, and studying law in the spare hours that intervened, he gradually prepared himself for the stern intellectual conflicts of his after life. He was admitted to the bar in Adams county, and soon rose to the head of his profession.

His oratorical powers, general information, and keenness of wit gained for him a State-wide celebrity. As an advocate he was quick and powerful. Laying hold of the strong points in a cause, he presented them in a succinct and comprehensive manner. A large and lucrative professional practice flowed in upon him, and almost at the outset he displayed that charity and generosity of his nature which distinguished his entire

Hosted by Google

life. He was always an ardent friend of public improvement and universal education, a bitter opponent to human slavery and oppression. In 1833 he became a candidate for the State legislature, and was elected and re-elected almost without opposition up to 1836, when he was chosen a member of the convention to revise the constitution of the State. During his services in the legislature and constitutional convention the attention of the country was attracted to his peculiar opinions, capacities, and character. With a cultured mind, formidable in debate and fearless in expression, he immediately became a leader and foremost in every movement that contemplated the improvement of the people and of his adopted State. In the convention for the amendment of the State constitution he was a violent opponent to the insertion of the word "white" as a qualification of voters, and opened upon its advocates all the invective of his ardent nature. But the crowning glory of his life is the noble disinterestedness, the manly courage, and the indomitable will displayed and exercised in the advocacy of the common-school system of Pennsylvania. To his tireless efforts are the people of his adopted State indebted for the incalculable blessing of free schools. Seconded in his efforts by the generous assistance of Governor George Wolf, he succeeded in having the school law passed, and when ignorance and prejudice sought and urged its repeal he again stood up in its defence. In a speech which abashed his opponents, and which the young of to-day still read with enthusiasm, he portrayed in a glowing light the grandeur of the system, and the importance of mental culture in order to sustain a republican form of government. To-day its benefits are seen and acknowledged. To-day the ostentatious rich and the humble poor drink at its fountain. To-day, standing by the tomb of its originator, thousands pay tribute to his memory and worth.

Hosted by Google

Mr. Stevens was prominent in the administration of Governor Ritner, and by him appointed canal commissioner. He subsequently realized that his undivided attention to politics had caused him to neglect his private affairs, and especially his large furnace in Adams county. He found himself involved in debts, said to exceed $200,000, caused mainly by his partner in the iron business. His ardent desire was to liquidate that indebtedness. The practice of the law at the Gettysburg bar offered little prospect for paying so large a sum, consequently he concluded to remove to a more extensive field, and finally selected Lancaster as his future abode. His extensive legal acquirements and superior abilities secured for him a large and lucrative practice at his new home, which in a few years enabled him to liquidate his entire indebtedness. Standing at the head of his profession, his many generous traits, political tact, and superiority won the confidence and respect of his fellow-citizens. In 1848 he was nominated and elected to the 31st Congress, and in 1850 was re-elected to the 32d Congress. At the expiration of his second term he again devoted his attention to the pursuits of his profession. He was afterward elected to the 37th, 38th, 39th, and 40th Congresses. Being a member of Congress during the most critical period of the nation's life, he displayed superior statesmanship and unflinching patriotism. Through all this stormy period his voice rang clear and loud, amid the pæans of victory and the glooms of national disaster, for the triumph of liberty and the permanency of the republic.

Believing in the justness of our cause, fully impressed with the importance of our success, he advanced with a majestic tread toward the realization of his hopes. He lived to see the federal authority vindicated, rebellion crushed, and the constitutional eradication of that barbaric institution against which for more than half a century he waged his grand but

Hosted by Google

merciless crusade. Then, the nation's power vindicated, its life rescued, its people freed, and its honor maintained, standing in the midst of his intellectual and political triumphs, with his fame national, and his name immortal, death intervened and drew the curtain over the drama of his long and eminently useful life. We shall never forget the meteoric displays of his ponderous logic, his burning rhetoric, his withering sarcasm. They are a part of the history and glory of the American Congress. Sleeping in his honored grave in his adopted State, resting from earthly care and toils, the melody of his grand life still is sounding and rolling like the "heavings of the sea." His name, interwoven and commingled with the philosophy of our most momentous history, will flow without interruption down the lapse of ages, the accompaniment of the great drama of human progress. His example, so potent and talismanic in the furtherance of philanthropy, will grow brighter and brighter as time advances and bravery is honored. He passed away with the calm composure of an old hero of romance "who had come into the world with the birthright of liberty for the peoples." He died nobly, as he had nobly lived, leaving his example as a guiding-star to the world.

"Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!"

Hosted by Google

Remarks by Mr. Orth.

Mr. SPEAKER: The grave has closed over the earthly remains of one of freedom's most ardent and eloquent advocates. The voice once so familiar in these halls is hushed in death; its sound no longer greets our ears, but its bold and fervid enunciations will never be forgotten.

That heroic devotion to truth and justice, to equality and fraternity, we so often admired, and which is exemplified by countless acts and incidents extending through years and years of an active existence, is a most worthy example for all good men.

The principles which he professed and the work which he performed, professions and practice being in perfect harmony, will in all future time and in all nations render the name of Stevens a synonym for human liberty.

Living in an age when opportunities for the accomplishment of great deeds abounded, he seized upon and improved these opportunities. His mind grasped the true philosophy of events, and his practical common sense molded them into forms of enduring usefulness. Living not unto himself, his life has not been in vain, and the impress of his genius upon the age in which he lived will be as permanent as his fame.

The early history of Thaddeus Stevens is similar to that of many of our ablest and most prominent public men. His parents were in indigent circumstances, and hence in his youth he was thrown upon his own resources, and taught those lessons of self-reliance which proved so valuable to him and to his country. He was born in the State of Vermont in 1792, and spent the days of his youth and early manhood among her people, whose thrift, energy, and frugality, long since proverbial, made a lasting impression upon his nature. He entered the academy of Peacham, and, by teaching during

Hosted by Google

the vacations of school, he procured the means by which he was enabled to prepare himself to enter upon a collegiate course of studies at Dartmouth College, where, in due time, he graduated with distinction.

He often referred, with evident gratification, to his academic days at Peacham, and evinced his attachment for the old academy by frequent donations of books to its library, as also by a valuable bequest in his last will and testament. Leaving his New England home, he selected Pennsylvania as his future place of residence, locating temporarily in the town of York, where he engaged in teaching school while prosecuting his legal studies. He was admitted to the bar in 1817, and immediately located in Gettysburg, where he continued to practice his profession with assiduity and marked success for the ensuing twenty-five years. His studious habits, his classic education, his attention to business, and his eloquence and ability soon placed him and kept him at the head of his profession, at a time, too, when he was brought into frequent contact with some of the best legal talent of the State. His bearing in the presence of the court and bar was always dignified and courteous; his cases were thoroughly digested and understood, and while he guarded carefully their weak points he readily perceived and took advantage of those of his adversary. In the examination of witnesses he was most successful, his pleasing and insinuating address gaining the confidence of the witness and eliciting a truthful recital of the facts, while his intimate knowledge of human nature enabled him at a glance to detect prevarication or dissimulation; and when detected he made the witness writhe under his unmerciful cross-examination.

He was invincible in the presentation of his facts, the application of the law to the testimony, and in the influence of his eloquence over the hearts and minds of the jurors.

Hosted by Google

Milton, one of his favorite authors, says:

> True eloquence I find to be none but serious and hearty love of truth.

This love of truth was one of the strongest elements in the character of Mr. Stevens, and enabled him so successfully to carry conviction to his hearers. He never practiced the arts of dissimulation, not merely because he was ignorant of their uses, but for the reason that his very nature, whose impulses he followed, led him to deal with perfect frankness and candor on every occasion.

He was equally candid with friend and foe, and nothing could induce him to betray the one or clandestinely injure the other. This virtue he practiced in the privacy of social life, at the bar, in his struggles on the political rostrum, and in the discharge of his severer and more exalted duties in the halls of legislation, and this, more than anything else, formed and increased the attachment of his friends and challenged the respect of his enemies. Did I say his enemies? Justice to his memory requires that I should rather use the words "political adversaries," for it is conceded by all who knew him that no man ever passed through such fierce and embittered contests, running through an active period of half a century, with so few personal enemies during his stay on earth, and no animosities extending beyond the grave. His love of truth made him an earnest man, acting upon the principle that whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well. He never espoused a cause until he was satisfied of its merits and justice, and then brought to its advocacy all the strength and vigor of a richly cultivated intellect.

The cause of education always received his hearty support. To elevate mankind, to improve their moral, intellectual, and physical condition; in a word, to leave the world better than he found it, was with him a duty which he never neglected.

At the time of his first election to the legislature of Penn-

Hosted by Google

sylvania, that State had taken no steps toward the organization of a system of general education. The education of her children had been left to private or individual enterprise, or to the voluntary effort of the people in each particular neighborhood. The utter inefficiency of these spasmodic and limited efforts to educate the youth of the State, or to diffuse intelligence among the people, was apparent to all reflecting persons, but it belonged to Stevens not only to make the inefficiency glaringly manifest, but to propose and carry into effect a proper remedy for the evil. He believed with Aristotle:

> That the education of youth ought to form the principal part of the legislators' attention cannot be a doubt, since education first molds and afterwards sustains the various modes of government. The better and more perfect the systems of education the better and more perfect the plan of government it is intended to introduce and uphold. In this important object fellow-citizens are all equally and deeply concerned; and as they are all united in one common work for one common purpose, their education ought to be regulated by the general consent, and not abandoned to the blind decision of chance or to idle caprice.

The innovator upon immemorial usage is never a welcome visitor. He meets with obstacles at the threshold of his operations, and difficulties and impediments beset him at every step in his progress.

That education should be universal; that the indigent orphan should have the same opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge with the son of his wealthy neighbor; that the man of affluence should be taxed to educate the child of penury, were ideas at that time not only novel, but repugnant to the views of a large majority of the people of Pennsylvania, and hence the attempt to embody them in the form of legislative enactment met with stern and general opposition.

Mr. Stevens was not the man to be swerved from his purposes by adverse opinions; he met argument with argument, conquered prejudice by the presentation of truth, and crushed the demagogue with his withering and irresistible sarcasm.

Hosted by Google

Amid difficulties which might have appalled more timid men, he entered upon the advocacy of the principle that all children are the wards of the commonwealth, and that it is alike the interest and the duty of the commonwealth to provide for their education.

The habits and opinions of a century do not readily yield to the demands of advancing ideas, and for years this question of universal education was the subject of animated and frequently of acrimonious discussion. It entered into the political contests of the day, and to such an extent was the opposition manifested that the motto "No free schools" was emblazoned on many banners, and became the shibboleth of partisan warfare. The contest was of long duration; but in all contests with error truth will eventually triumph, and his adopted State now justly exults in having, through his instrumentality, one of the best systems of popular education in the Union.

Many of his best friends at the time feared the effect of his bold advocacy of so unpopular a measure on his future political prospects; but this was a consideration which never entered his mind, and his course on this question, like all the great acts of his life, exhibited the unselfishness of his nature.

In addressing his constituents at Gettysburg, while this question was agitating the people, he said:

> I shall feel myself abundantly rewarded for all my efforts in behalf of universal education if a single child educated by the commonwealth shall drop a tear of gratitude on my grave.

During his residence at Gettysburg an academy or gymnasium was organized by a few of the prominent citizens, and Stevens soon conceived the idea of building on this modest foundation an institution of more enlarged pretension and of much wider usefulness. Through his influence as a member of the legislature a charter was obtained changing the gym-

Hosted by Google

nasium to "The Pennsylvania College;" and what was then remarkable, he also secured a donation from the State of an amount of money sufficient to erect for the college its principal and most costly edifice. The consideration for this munificent grant was the gratuitous education by the college of a specified number of indigent young men who might from time to time avail themselves of this privilege, and the further condition that the German language should constantly be taught in the institution, which conditions have at all times been most faithfully performed. He was prominently and actively connected with the material and educational interests of the college, as a member of the board of trustees, from its organization to the time of his death.

The trustees have recently erected an additional edifice to be used in connection with the college, which, in honor of his friendship for the institution and the interest he manifested in its success, has most appropriately been named "Stevens's Hall."

He was a zealous advocate of free speech, concurring fully in the sentiment of Jefferson, that "error of opinion can safely be tolerated so long as reason is left free to combat it."

To him the idea was most preposterous that there should be any subject so sacred as to forbid examination or debate. Whatever seeks to avoid scrutiny or shrinks from investigation is justly subject to suspicion, and that which cannot bear the test of thorough discussion is in its nature inimical to republican institutions.

I remember an incident, which occurred during my schoolboy days at Gettysburg, at once illustrating his devotion to the cause of free speech and his influence over the minds of those with whom he was brought in contact.

In 1837 the anti-slavery question began to be agitated in various parts of the country, and Professor Blanchard, of

Hosted by Google

Cincinnati, one of the earliest advocates of emancipation, visited Gettysburg for the purpose of delivering a series of anti-slavery lectures. The very announcement of his purpose created an intense excitement in the community, for Gettysburg is situated within a few miles of the old Mason and Dixon's line, and an abolition lecturer would have been just as welcome in Maryland as in the border counties of Pennsylvania.

The professor called his meeting and challenged discussion. The challenge was accepted by two of the most prominent citizens of the borough; but at the close of the debate resolutions were passed deprecating any further agitation on the subject, and plainly intimating to the professor that his presence was no longer desirable in that community—a hint which in those days was very generally understood.

Mr. Stevens had been absent on professional business; but on his return, learning what had been done, another meeting was called, and the court-house was soon filled with an angry and excited audience. He requested some friend to move a reconsideration of the resolutions, and then proceeded to address the meeting. Those who heard his effort on that occasion will never forget it. His manner was calm, deliberate, impressive, and the excited crowd listened with earnest attention. To listen was to be convinced. Warming gradually with his subject, he enforced the right of free discussion on all subjects with a power and an eloquence which his audience had never heard. The sacred rights of American citizenship, secured by constitutional guarantees, were defended by a master hand. In turn he used persuasion, entreaty, argument, wit, and sarcasm, until finally, turning to his old neighbors and friends, he appealed to their sense of honor and justice, to their individual reputation and the reputation of their community, as deeply involved in their contemplated

Hosted by Google

proceedings; and when he took his seat the resolutions, which had been previously adopted without a dissenting voice, found no one bold enough to advocate their passage. On the contrary, a new set of resolutions were introduced and passed with singular unanimity, affirming the right of free discus sion, and inviting this early anti-slavery missionary to continue his labors.

The triumph was complete, not only for Mr. Stevens, but, what was infinitely more gratifying to him, it was a triumph of reason over prejudice; and, I need hardly add, it was the last attempt to apply the "slaveholder's gag" in that portion of our country.

He was the firm friend of the oppressed and the implacable enemy of the oppressor. Like the great Wesley before him, he regarded the institution of American slavery as "the sum of all villanies," and suffered no occasion to pass unimproved when in his power to expose its monstrosity or destroy its vitality.

He was ever ready "to proclaim liberty throughout the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof;" and when the institution began to crumble and fall, amid the crackling flames of that rebellion which it had instigated, he felt like exclaiming, with one of old:

> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

While practicing his profession at Gettysburg, the cases of fugitive slaves were quite numerous, and where arrests were made which came to his knowledge, he invariably volunteered his services to defend the alleged fugitive; and it is among the reminiscences of the neighborhood that he seldom if ever failed to secure the freedom of his clients.

On one occasion, while journeying to Baltimore for the purpose of replenishing his law library, he stopped for the night

Hosted by Google

at a hotel in Maryland, kept by a man with whom he was well acquainted. Soon after his arrival he discovered quite a commotion among the servants at the hotel, and a woman in tears approached him and implored his assistance to prevent the contemplated sale of her husband, who was a slave. On inquiring who and where her husband was, she replied, "Why, Massa Stevens, he is the boy who took your horse to the stable." Stevens knew the "boy," and at once went to his owner and expostulated with him in reference to his sale, and at length offered to pay him $150, half the price, if he would restore him to liberty. The landlord was inexorable, and Stevens, knowing the relations between the slave and his master, replied, "Mr. ——, are you not ashamed to sell your own flesh and blood?" This stinging appeal only brought forth the response, "I must have money, and John is cheap at $300."

Prompted by his generous nature Stevens purchased and manumitted "John," and then retraced his steps to Gettysburg, without completing his journey to Baltimore. At that time $300 was a large sum of money for one who had been but a few years at the bar, and he postponed the replenishing of his law library to a more convenient season.

The word charity in its broadest sense fails to express the boundless benevolence of his heart. He was never so happy as on those occasions when he could assist the suffering, relieve the distressed, and comfort the needy.

No one ever applied to him for assistance and was refused. While struggling with poverty himself he gave the widow's mite, and when afterward success attended him his bounties were increased in corresponding ratios. He was not only "a cheerful giver," but in these matters he was not willing that the right hand should know what the left hand had done. He preferred that his charities should descend quietly as the

Hosted by Google

dews of heaven, and, like the summer breeze, be felt but not seen.

Like Cornelius, he "gave much alms to the people;" in fact, he was the almoner of Gettysburg during his long residence there, with this wide difference, that he made distribution only of his own means, and never limited his benefactions to the tenth of his income.

When lurking treason, which had been nursed for years in our country by men high in favor with the people and high in official station, culminated in civil war, Stevens was a most prominent and influential member of this House. His whole life had witnessed his devotion to the country, to those fundamental principles proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, and his faith in their ultimate incorporation into the national Constitution.

The first hostile gun of the rebellion convinced him that the accursed institution of slavery would be overthrown, that the Union would survive the shock of battles, and that the conflict would evolve a purer republicanism and an advanced spirit of humanity.

His efforts in and out of Congress were devoted to a vigorous prosecution of the war, to devising ways and means for such prosecution, and to keep the public mind firmly fixed upon the true nature of the assault upon the Union, and its defence, and thus to have it prepared to accept those truths which he foresaw would inevitably result from a victory for the Union.

The patient, self-sacrificing endurance of our people and the valor of our soldiers at length crushed the rebellion, and re-established, so far as military power could re-establish, the authority of the national government. With the cessation of hostilities came questions of civil polity, as important as they were novel, requiring solution and permanent adjustment.

Hosted by Google

The public mind was unsettled; conflicting opinions most naturally forced themselves to the surface, while political theories, formed on the narrow basis of old passions and prejudices, claimed public attention. Here was a field for the statesman, and Stevens entered it with that self-reliance with which a consciousness of his own power and the strength of his political convictions invested him. Others doubted and hesitated, but to him the future was as unclouded and as certain as the past. He was no revolutionist, but, penetrating through the gloom of battles and the uncertainties which troubled most minds, he perceived the end from the beginning, and when the end came he was prepared to meet its demands and its responsibilities.

The apparently popular heresy that the States in rebellion had not by that act changed their "proper practical relations" to the Union, and hence were at once restored to their former position, was soon dissipated by the sturdy blows it received under his leadership.

With the abandonment of this theory the true policy to be pursued toward the States and people lately in rebellion was easily ascertained, and the emphatic endorsement of that policy by the voice of the nation, together with the gradual accomplishment of its purposes, have demonstrated alike its wisdom and its justice.

He is gone. He has finished his course on earth, but the great work to which he devoted so many hours of patient thought and honest toil is not yet finished. The high aim of his life, that to which he brought all the energies of his nature, which enlisted the warm sympathies of his noble soul and engaged the powers of his vigorous intellect, was to have his country free and all her people equal, to have a land

"Where manhood reigns alone,
And every citizen is king."

Hosted by Google

Freedom has been obtained, but freedom has not yet been secured, and will not be secured until all our people shall have the full enjoyment of perfect equality by the law and before the law. Freedom without secured equality of rights is a delusion and a snare; and although his countrymen have in his memory and in his deeds a rich legacy which they will always cherish with pride and with honor, yet with this legacy is coupled a responsibility, and that is to proceed with the work in which he was so zealously engaged, to complete the structure in the spirit of its master workman. So complete it that from foundation-stone to turret, in all its parts and designs, there shall be no fault and no blemish; that the eye of the critic can discover no defects, and the heart of the patriot desire no change. So complete it that when finished it will meet with the approbation of all good men and the approval of a just God.

He is gone. That frail tenement of clay so lately moving among us is mingling with its kindred dust, but the name and fame of Thaddeus Stevens will never die.

In all the coming years of time, so long as patriotism has a votary and freedom an advocate, his name will be lisped and his fame will be cherished by the countless millions of the future, and while his countrymen linger around his consecrated grave their aspirations will ascend to Heaven that a kind Providence who rules over the destinies of nations may grant to our beloved country many more such men.

Remarks by Mr. Koontz.

Mr. SPEAKER: The ordinary business of the day is suspended, that the House of Representatives may pay its tribute of respect to the memory of its departed leader. Since the last session of this Congress Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, representa-

Hosted by Google

tive from the ninth congressional district of Pennsylvania, ripe in years and in wisdom, and honored with the confidence and love of his fellow-countrymen, has passed from time into eternity. No word in commendation of his distinguished services to the country or in praise of his great talents is needed in this presence, where he was so well known; nor are the eulogies that are pronounced here on this occasion necessary to convey to the nation a correct idea of the characteristics of the deceased. A prominent actor in the mighty events which have transpired within the last eight years, he stands out in marked distinctness before a people who have watched with intense pleasure his devotion to country, with unbounded admiration the exhibition of his commanding talents, and who have on frequent occasions been swayed by his resistless, burning eloquence.

But if the tear of sorrow is shed for and the word of tribute spoken of the less distinguished of earth who have passed from the stage of life, with how much more sorrow should we mourn those who are numbered among the nation's dead! When they who have achieved distinction in war, statesmanship, oratory, poetry, science, or philosophy have "shuffled off this mortal coil," the rivalries that were begotten in the busy arena of life are remembered no longer, the peculiarities of character that excited hostility in the breasts of others are forgotten, and a generous people remember only the ability and virtue of the deceased and treasure them as evidence of the nation's advancement in civilization, and as the enduring monuments of her own greatness and glory. The many years of distinguished public service of the deceased, his skill as a parliamentarian, his recognized ability as a leader, and the powerful influence he wielded in the councils of the nation gave him such prominence in the eyes of the American people that since his death they remember him not only as the leader

Hosted by Google

of a great party, but as a great American statesman, whose name will be inscribed on the historic page along with those whom the nation delights to honor.

Of the prominent men of this generation perhaps none have greater claims to public gratitude than Mr. Stevens. In Pennsylvania his name will ever be associated with the beneficent system of common schools, the establishment of which was owing to his ability, perseverance, and energy. The humblest lad in the rudest cabin within the limits of the State will live to bless the memory of Thaddeus Stevens, for having placed within his reach the means of an education. If, according to the distinguished historian, Macaulay, the gift of Athens to mankind of intellectual knowledge constitutes her chief glory, and will perpetuate her memory, even in the decay of her language and the degeneracy of her people, to the remotest posterity, amid the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, may it not truthfully be said that the people of Pennsylvania owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Stevens for this great gift to her sons, which will exist as long as her mountains stand, and that his memory will be preserved by them while their language remains to speak his praises?

But, passing beyond the confines of his adopted State, we find that his name is widely known throughout the country, and that by his public course he has earned a nation's gratitude. A gigantic civil war threatened the life of the nation and its public men were put to the severest test. Mr. Stevens at once rose into marked prominence by his determined and powerful hostility to the rebellion, its aiders and abettors; and his opposition, after its overthrow, to all measures looking to the political ascendency in the government of those lately in arms to destroy it, made him the idol of the loyal millions of the country. Other men might be misled either by a mistaken notion of what was due to traitors, or a false philanthropy, or

Hosted by Google

wicked ambition, or desire for party predominance, but there was an abiding faith in the loyal people of the country that in Thaddeus Stevens there was "no variableness or shadow of turning," and that in all the mutations of time and tergiversations of men, he would be true to the cause for which their sons and brothers had fallen. His career to its close vindicated fully the popular confidence in his fidelity to principle.

In foreign governments the noble men who are inaugurating movements looking to the disenthralment of the masses from kingly and aristocratic rule, lament his death, and in this hour of sadness and sorrow we have their deepest sympathy. There is always a strong tie between men of enlarged minds and com prehensive intellects, although there may be wide differences of opinion between them as to the best mode of advancing the interests of society and the promotion of the welfare and happiness of mankind; but how much stronger the tie that binds the men who are moving together in the great cause of humanity! The champions of liberal principles in every clime realize that one of their noble band is no more, and not only a State and nation, but oppressed humanity everywhere, deplore the death of the great advocate of human rights.

But his memory will be fondly cherished by that large body of people so recently liberated from human slavery. An early opponent of that institution, he battled against it with all the power of his gigantic intellect, until the last shackle of the last slave was broken, and this day he is revered by them next only to the immortal Lincoln. His name is a household word in the humble cabins of four million people whom he has helped up from the degrading condition of bondage into the blessed light of freedom, and will be inseparably linked with that great act of national justice by which the emancipation of a race from servitude was achieved.

As a private citizen he was kind and generous, and always

Hosted by Google

ready to lend a helping hand to the needy and distressed. In public life he was remarkably candid and unreserved in expression of opinion. There was as little danger of mistaking his views on any subject of public interest as that his antagonists would not feel the strength of his powerful intellect in enforcing them. He has been aptly styled the great Commoner of the United States. In many respects he was like the great Commoner of England. Like him he was bold and fearless in the advocacy of the measures he espoused. Like the elder Pitt he was not sordid. His worst enemy could not say of him that he enriched himself at the expense of the public. Like him he carried his measures often by his terrible earnestness, often by his withering sarcasm and fiery invective. Like him he rose into great and commanding influence in the nation, and successfully carried out the measure he had so dauntlessly advocated.

But, sir, time does not permit me to extend these remarks. A great man has fallen. This hall will no longer resound with his eloquence or the nation be thrilled with his patriotic utterances, but in the ages to come the heart of the patriot and lover of humanity will swell with joy and gratitude at the mention of the name of Thaddeus Stevens.

Remarks by Mr. Donnelly.

MR. SPEAKER: As a representative of one of the new Commonwealths of the great West, I would add a few words to the tributes which have already been paid to the memory of Mr. Stevens. The West owed him much. Although born among the mountains of Vermont, and representing here an inland district of Pennsylvania, his heart was as broad and liberal as his brain, and embraced in its great scope every portion of the continent. His sympathies were especially

Hosted by Google

active in behalf of those new communities whose destiny has been to subdue the wilderness and spread in constantly widening circles the domain of society and civilization. It is especially fitting, therefore, that the West should add to the wreaths which already adorn his bier.

In every aspect in which we consider him Mr. Stevens was a great man.

No one who ever knew him could doubt the prodigious force and vigor of his intellect. It seemed to embrace all the diversified subjects of legislation incident to a great country and a high degree of civilization. While there might be here and there a member who, upon some special topic, surpassed him, there was no man in Congress who was so thoroughly conversant with such a multitude of subjects. A singularly retentive memory held ever ready for use the experience and the learning acquired during a long and industrious life. The movements of his mind were as original and peculiar as they were rapid and accurate. His power in debate was unequalled. His replies were such as could not be anticipated. He flashed back upon his opponent from some new stand-point, or with some quaint conceit that astonished while it confused him. His irony was terrible; it was withering; it denuded sophistry to the bones. It left no room for reply. The adroitness acquired during long practice at the bar was everywhere manifested in his conduct of debate. He knew when to strike and when to loosen his hold, and when to yield the non-essentials to save the essentials, but he never forsook his purpose.

An intellect of this nature, accompanied by a degree of physical vigor which carried the vivacity of youth and the endurance of manhood far into the domain of old age, would have made Mr. Stevens a marked man in any position in life and in any age of the world. But behind this intellect there was a character still more remarkable. Behind this

Hosted by Google

brain-power there lay a will-power which has rarely been equalled among the sons of men; an intensity of purpose which no obstacle could arrest, no defeat daunt, and a determination of character which brightened with every encounter and rose freshened from every overthrow. Nothing could stand in the path of his purpose. That grim face never turned aside to catch the fickle murmurs of popular applause. Public opinion had no terrors for him. It should be written over his tomb that "he never played the demagogue." He never stepped down upon the lower plane of popular error, but at all times and on all occasions he dared to do right, looking Heaven in the face and fearing no man. He never flattered the people; he never attempted to deceive them; he never "paltered with them in a double sense;" he never courted and encouraged their errors. On the contrary, on all occasions he attacked their sins, he assailed their prejudices, he outraged all their bigotries; and when they turned upon him and attacked him he marched straight forward, like Gulliver wading through the fleets of the Lilliputians, dragging his enemies after him into the great harbor of truth.

But all his intellect and character were secondary to the principles which underlaid them. These were, indeed, great and noble.

Nature had given Mr. Stevens a generous heart. He was emphatically the friend of man. He seemed to feel that every wrong inflicted upon the human race was a blow struck at himself. He could not understand that a wrong could have any rights. He denied the power of time to sanctify injustice. The dust of antiquity could not screen from his indignant glance the horrible proportions of cruelty. He seemed to feel that there should be no peace in this world until every wrong was righted, and he believed that the true end of government was to right all the wrongs men suffer. He was the embodied

Hosted by Google

spirit of revolution. In the great French struggle his oratory would have outblazed Mirabeau. He would have exulted in the glorious work of tearing to shreds monarchy and aristocracy, and lifting to their feet the poor, degraded, oppressed peasantry of France.

He would admit no compromise with wrong. It could neither smile nor frown, nor coax nor bully him into submission. Even the dark shadow of assassination could not turn him a hair-breadth from his path. He brought the spirit of John Brown into the work of the statesman. He led the assault against an embattled host of wrongs and errors, and under the providence of God they went down before him and left the field clear almost to the horizon. All honor in the day of peace to the gallant leader whose ringing voice never faltered amid all the surging uncertainties of the terrible struggle.

Against slavery as the mighty embodiment of all human wrongs Mr. Stevens threw the force of his intellect and character from the very first. He felt with Mr. Lincoln that "if slavery was not wrong nothing was wrong." Its presence under the American flag he regarded as an outrage; it polluted the very air; it cried out with a million tongues to heaven; no fact, no incident connected with it, but was a perpetual appeal to the human heart. Mr. Stevens was from the first an uncompromising abolitionist—not yesterday alone, but thirty, forty, fifty years ago, when slavery was a sacred thing, and its opponents were ranked among the criminals of the land.

Such sentiments for a long time excluded him from public life. At length came the great revolution. The blind wrong had dragged down upon itself the pillars of the temple. The curtain rose upon the grandest drama of the world; and the grim, iron-willed old man stepped forward to do his appointed work. His was the most striking figure of all the illustrious

Hosted by Google

group gathered in that great scene. He had no doubts—no scruples; he did not weep over his opportunities; he exulted in them. He seized axe and brand and set himself to work to burn and hew out the giant wrong of American society, and the rigid lips never relaxed while he thought a single root or branch retained vitality. It was his privilege to live until the work of legislation was completed and the institutions of the country placed on the broad basis which his heart and judgment approved. His dying ears heard only the growlings of the turbid and bloody waves of rebellion as they settled and subsided into peace forever.

Mr. Stevens regarded his labors in behalf of popular education as the crowning glory of his life. He was right. Here his enlarged philanthropy and his far-reaching statesmanship had fullest scope. The school-houses of Pennsylvania are his noblest monument. Innumerable generations yet unborn will, in that illustrious Commonwealth, preserve his name in perpetual remembrance as their first and greatest benefactor.

A life so complete does not ask our tears. Here is room only for pride and admiration, and gratitude to God that in the hour of our deadly need he raised up such a man to lead our national councils, and to infuse into a wavering nation his own indomitable spirit and his own magnificent love of right and horror of injustice. He passes into history, and the love of a great people gathers around and accompanies and hallows him. It can be justly said of him "he was the friend of man." The world holds no prouder eulogy.

Remarks by Mr. Cake.

Mr. SPEAKER: The public man who works for fame rarely achieves it. If he does, he soon finds it a perishing uncertainty. After all, posterity is an inexorable judge, and no matter how

Hosted by Google

the paid eulogist or the partial historian exaggerates what is good or palliates what is bad, time's ultimate verdict is always discriminating and just.

Thaddeus Stevens was a fine illustration of this theory. No statesman in any age so often took issue with what is called public opinion, but what might be better styled public prejudice. Emigrating to Pennsylvania more than a half a century ago from New England, that normal school of the continent, and settling down among the retrogressive German population on the borders of a slave State, and sharing much of the intolerance of slavery, the very first thing he did was to take up arms for education and freedom. These were the pole stars of all his politics, and in following them he encountered more obstacles than ever beset the pathway of a public man. There is something sublime in his struggle with these obstacles. Undismayed he pursued the bitter path; undaunted he met the organized foe. No expediency, no compromise, no party turned him aside from his grand objective point. His efforts for universal education were crowned with victory earlier than his efforts against slavery.

But he was, if possible, more intense in his hostility to slavery than in his championship of education. Here he was the foremost teacher of the middle States. With a heroism that outlived censure and defied majorities, he maintained the unequal fight through more than a generation. Caring nothing for himself and nothing for party, if he could not mold the latter according to his principles, he aroused the most violent enmities and dared the most formidable combinations. If freedom won he was content; to secure that he was always ready to sacrifice everything else.

And now, Mr. Speaker, as we look back over the past eight years, is there one Republican who will not admit that if we had followed his lead from the first, much of the resulting

Hosted by Google

treachery, bloodshed, and death would have been avoided? We have reached the remedy at last; and what is that which gives us safety, which secures the rights of millions yet unborn, but that great remedy of Thaddeus Stevens: justice, equality, and freedom to all men, irrespective of race, color, or nativity?

Our great leader did not work for fame. He did not play the courtier; he did not deal in the currency of compromise; he did not flatter the people; he never was a beggar for their votes. And yet, behold! He is remembered, and honored in his remembrance, by friend and foe. Look at this house to-day. Recall the loud acclaim of sorrow that mourned his death while it conceded his matchless attributes, and tell me, sir, if this is not genuine fame, that fame resulting from a bold, manly, rugged, and unselfish career, unsought, untoiled for, yet freely tendered by a proud and grateful country, without distinction of party, sect, or creed?

Sir, it is not often that one man can do so much for any people as Thaddeus Stevens has done. But for him Pennsylvania would have been, perhaps, the last of the old free States to establish an educational system based upon equal taxation. But for his example our seminaries of learning would have been inferior and few. Half a million young men and women within our borders are this day chiefly indebted to him for the blessings of a sound education. I freely acknowledge my own indebtedness. When he delivered his great speech in the house of representatives of Pennsylvania, in 1835, I was seven years old. The institutions that sprang into existence under the inspiration of that great effort proved to be my opportunity, and I shall never cease to bear testimony to the value of his work on that occasion.

Reared in another political party, I never failed to cherish and honor his name; and when I entered the printing office in my thirteenth year, found myself equipped for a rapid and

Hosted by Google

thorough understanding of the mysteries of that art of all arts. Later in life, when the war dissolved old party prejudices, and when, a democratic journalist, I found that as one of the advocates of Judge Douglas for President the honest logic of my convictions placed me in association with the republican party, it was a natural progress for me to become one of the followers of Thaddeus Stevens, and to oppose slavery as I had opposed all the antagonism of the school law.

Coming into this House at the close of the war, in which I did but my duty as a soldier and citizen, I looked up to him as my leader and my friend. I had never met him till I saw him on this floor; here, upon every occasion I found him a kind, intelligent, and generous mentor. Once, for reasons that I deemed conclusive to my mind, I voted against an appropriation to one of the colleges in this District. It was very nearly lost, when Mr. Stevens asked me to change my vote, saying that he would give me his reasons for the request after the bill was disposed of. Upon the announcement of the result he turned to me and said: "Young man, let me implore you in all your after life never to oppose any measure for the education of the people. Follow this advice and you will never regret it."

Mr. Speaker, it is never becoming to cover the dead with unmerited eulogy, and in speaking these honest words of Thaddeus Stevens I am not trying to make him a perfect character. Like all strong men, he had his faults, and he neither denied nor defended them; but in the sterling traits of manhood he was a conspicuous example. The eloquent gentlemen who have preceded me have told you how brave he was in public life, how true to his convictions, how fearless in his support of all measures intended to elevate the people and to develop the resources of the country.

Not to-day, but in the time to come, will Thaddeus Stevens

Hosted by Google

be fully appreciated. His whole life was devoted to the cause of humanity, and he lived to see the fruition of his hopes in the most complete victory over the enemies of education in Pennsylvania and of freedom throughout our land. Congratulating himself upon his two great victories, he could peacefully fold his arms in the sleep that knows no waking upon earth, secure in the belief that he had accomplished a great work, and that those who profit by his life will revere his memory forever. The men and women who have been and are yet to be educated in the common schools of Pennsylvania, and the bond who have been made free, to free whom he gave the labor of his best days, are the beneficiaries of his noble and self-sacrificing life.

That which will stand to his honor as long as his record as a statesman are these proofs of his love for his fellow-men. No great benevolence ever appealed to him in vain. No poor man struggling with adversity, no young man who sought his aid in the beginning of his career, no penitent rebel, impoverished by the war, ever asked Thaddeus Stevens in vain for assistance. What is this but a religious example? How much better, Mr. Speaker, than the hollow profession which contents itself with words, and never ripens into glorious deeds! Leigh Hunt's beautiful allegory has often been applied to others, but it seems to have been written for Thaddeus Stevens. Bear with me as I read it to you, and tell me if it be not a faithful picture of the great mind which, though the body it animated is dust, still lives to guide and strengthen the children of men:

> Abou Ben Adhem —may his tribe increase—
> Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
> And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
> Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
> An angel writing in a book of gold.
> Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,

Hosted by Google

And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had bless'd,
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Remarks by Mr. Woodward.

Mr. SPEAKER: My acquaintance with Mr. Stevens began in 1835. He was a man of mark from his first appearance in the legislature of Pennsylvania, and he advanced at once in that body to the front rank of debaters, though the best talents of the State were then in the legislature.

I well remember the passionate appeals by which he lashed our staid old commonwealth into a frenzy of prejudice against the Masonic institution for its guilty agency, supposed or actual, in the abduction and murder of Morgan, not long before, in western New York. Mr. Stevens made himself the great champion of the anti-Masonic party, and the leader of those who elected Joseph Ritner governor in 1835. Having accepted the office of canal commissioner from Governor Ritner, and retaining his seat in the legislature as the representative of Adams county, he carried measures with a high hand for three years. Beyond all question he became the most influential man in Pennsylvania. The star of his fame culminated to its zenith. Doubtless his bold and earnest nature hurried him into many excesses of opinion; but it is creditable to his memory that, in that day of his greatest power, he was the eloquent advocate of a system of common

Hosted by Google

schools which, though vehemently opposed in its origin, has grown into great favor with the people of Pennsylvania. Governor Ritner, like many of the Germans of our State, regarded the system with distrust, while Governor Wolf, who was Ritner's competitor for gubernatorial honors in 1835, favored its introduction. Mr. Stevens staked his political fortunes on this measure. Alluding to the contest between Wolf and Ritner, and to its possible turn upon the school question, he exclaimed, "If this is to be a struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, I go for him whose banner streams in light." His significant threat brought the anti-Masonic party into the support of the school law.

It was during this period that I met Mr. Stevens in a popular convention held in the court-house at Harrisburg, and which was called the "Integrity of the Union convention." Alarmed at the tendency of the measures of New England abolitionists, the people of Pennsylvania sent delegates to Harrisburg to strengthen the bands of the Union. Mr. Stevens ridiculed the convention into nothingness. Affecting excessive solicitude for the "integrity of the Union," he brought his matchless powers of invective and sarcasm to bear against every measure that was proposed, and, with the adoption of some unimportant resolutions, the convention vanished.

I next met him in the Reform Convention, a body elected in pursuance of law to propose amendments to the constitution of Pennsylvania. At first he took a very active part in the organization and debates of this body, but gradually his interest in its proceedings subsided until he withdrew himself almost wholly from its deliberations. He declined to sign the new constitution because the word "white" had been introduced into the suffrage clause before the word freeman, thus

Hosted by Google

limiting suffrage to white freemen. On no subject were his opinions more firmly fixed than in favor of the social and political equality of the African with the Caucasian. Of this his course in Congress, which is known and read of all men, has afforded abundant illustration.

In the fall of 1838 the great political contest came on between David R. Porter, the democratic candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, and Governor Ritner, who was up for re-election on the anti-Masonic ticket. Mr. Stevens did his utmost for Ritner. He brought into full play not only all his great resources of eloquence, wit, and sarcasm, but as canal commissioner, having control of considerable patronage, he inaugurated a system of colonization for political effect, which politicians have improved upon and practiced more or less ever since. Porter beat Ritner in 1838, and then Mr. Stevens made the capital mistake of his life in determining to treat the election as if it had not occurred. This brought on the "buckshot war." That disturbance made no strain upon our political institutions. Indeed, it is doubtful if it excited as much attention from the people of the other States as its importance demanded, but abroad it was looked upon as a portentous event. The late Mr. Dallas, our then minister at the court of St. Petersburg, told me he was annoyed by daily notes from the whole diplomatic circle anxiously inquiring for the news from Harrisburg, while his correspondents at home treated the subject as too insignificant to allude to, and therefore he had no information to communicate. But the buckshot war, if it wrought no great political revolution, took Mr. Stevens out of political life for many years. He removed to the city of Lancaster and addressed himself with great ability and success to the practice of his profession. It was my privilege to know much of him as a lawyer, and it affords me far more pleasure to contemplate his professional than his political career.

Hosted by Google

As a Pennsylvania lawyer he had learned to appreciate that greatest luminary of the bench, Hon. John B. Gibson, and at the May term of the supreme court, in 1853, Mr. Stevens announced the decease of Judge Gibson in brief and exquisite terms. His neat speech, together with the more elaborate eulogy of Chief Justice Black, is printed in the seventh volume of Harris's State Reports, and both productions will well repay the perusal.

As a lawyer Mr. Stevens was bold, honorable, and candid, clear in statement, brief in argument, and always deferential to the bench. He was not copious in his citation of adjudged cases. I think he relied more upon the reasons, than upon the authorities of the law. Indeed, his tastes inclined him rather to the study of polite literature than of the black letter. He loved Pope's Essay on Man more than Siderfin's Reports. Yet he betrayed no defect of preparation at the bar. He always came with a keen discernment of the strong points of his case, and he spoke to them directly, concisely, and with good effect. His humor was irrepressible and trenchant; sometimes it cut like a Damascus blade. He was a lucky lawyer who would go through an argument with Mr. Stevens without being laughed at for something. Mr. Stevens's legal sagacity was exhibited here, in the presence of all of us, when he suggested the eleventh article of impeachment, which came nearer costing the President his official life than all the other articles together.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have said enough to indicate the high regard in which the deceased was held as a lawyer in Pennsylvania. Differing from him, *toto cœlo*, in politics and religion, I cannot think that the final influence of his great talents upon the public mind will be salutary, nor do I think posterity, to whom the arbitrament belongs, will rank him as a benefactor of his race. But, nevertheless, there was much in him to

Hosted by Google

admire. His honesty and directness of purpose, his courage, his scorn and contempt for the low arts of political tricksters; his generosity to the poor, for his hand and his heart were as open as the day to them; his learning, his eloquence, his temperance, his industry, his firm will, his self-poise—these were the qualities that constituted his greatness and his excellence; and if his fame outlasts the age in which he lived, it will be because it is built on these foundations. "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*" Dr. Johnson thought that for "*bonum*" we should read "*verum.*" I approve the criticism, and I esteem it high praise of Mr. Stevens that it can be said of him he so passed through life that his name can endure the application of the maxim even in its improved reading.

Remarks by Mr. Robinson.

Mr. SPEAKER: Among the people of Ireland, whose legends and poetry are frequently fringed with the silver foam of superstition, there is a venerable and ever-to-be-venerated custom, in the observance of which on meeting a funeral you turn with it, and for a time, however brief, become a part of the solemn procession. It matters not who treads the dark pathway to the grave, whether death's footbeats have knocked at the castle or the cabin, to the rich and the poor, to the lowly and the lordly, is paid this universal homage, by to-day's living and to-morrow's dead.

Athwart my weary footsteps over life's rugged highway this funeral procession to-day occurs. He who in life provoked such enmities and secured such friendships is now beyond the reach of both, but as this pageant passes I uncover my head and mingle my footsteps in its solemnities.

Of his political opinions, his loves and hatreds, his passions and his prejudices, it is not for me here to speak. With many

Hosted by Google

of them I never could, nor is it likely I ever shall, sympathize. My prejudices against him were as strong as his against others, and I must confess that on taking my seat here I should not have regretted had I been able to provoke a controversy with him, however much the odds might have been against me; and upon two or three occasions when he expressed dissent from my views I did not hesitate to intimate that it would not be disagreeable to me to receive his attack and break a lance with him. I had even gone so far as to look into the public records of his adopted State, over which his words and works are voluminously written, to see if I could find a crevice in his armor through which I might more successfully assail him. Had I provoked a controversy with him my temerity might have been made manifest to all, and might have betrayed me into language which to-day and for all time would be a cause of regret to me and mine. On two or three occasions when I addressed this House he came over to this side of the hall and took a seat in front of mine, sometimes interrupting me with a playful or more serious observation, but seeming to give a pleasant refusal to my rash challenge, and to wish rather to encourage than to wound.

Is it unbecoming in me, therefore, now that his ear is forever closed to censure or to flattery, to say that my search for inconsistency in his public career was in vain; that he above all men seemed at least consistent in his opinions and singularly bold in expressing and defending them?

> To cowards and despots a hatred undying,
> For freedom a passion intense and relying,
> A pride in the resolute band;
> A hope that could see not a danger to shun
> When bonds should be broken and liberty won.

Radically as we differed on measures in defence of which most of his time recently was occupied, there were many subjects on which we had kindred sympathies. For the oppressed

Hosted by Google

people of Ireland, for the vindication of the rights of American citizens, for the speedier extension of citizenship and suffrage to our immigrant population, he had strong and pronounced opinions. And to me it is a source of regret that his voice will not be heard nor will his influence be felt in the discussion and settlement of these questions; that in the great contest which I fear is approaching on one of them, his clarion voice will not be heard as it would have been had he lived, rallying his followers and partisans to the defence of the Declaration of Independence, which he contended guaranteed to the governed the right of choosing their governors by universal manhood suffrage, as well for recent emigrants from despotisms in Europe as for immediate emigrants from slavery everywhere.

We have all observed the frail and yet tenacious hold which he appeared to have on life. Nature had given him many difficulties to conquer; society had bestowed on him but few of its smiles. His life seemed to be a life of sorrow sufficiently marked to explain, if not to excuse, his apparent bitterness. No kindly voice to whisper comfort in his sorrows; no hand to soften the asperities with which this world's conflicts will harden the downiest pillow; no kindred heart in whose sympathetic throbbings he could read the alphabet of love. He seemed like an eagle, perched alone upon a blasted oak in sullen and defiant majesty, scorning alike the chatter and the scream of other birds around him; his eye sometimes seemingly covered with film as of down from the passing wing of death, but in a moment shooting into pinions on which he proudly soared to the sun.

That proud and defiant spirit, often fierce, sometimes unforgiving, and always bold and honest, has passed away. Is it presumption to hope that beneath all his outward apparent harshness there was an undercurrent of benevolence; that the thunder-cloud which hung upon his rugged brow, and

Hosted by Google

from beneath which flashed the lightning of his sunken eye, melted into the rainbow of hope and the light of love, and that the closing scenes of his life, the holy influence, pure prayers, and sacred rites of the pious sisters, to whom both here and at Emmittsburg, in Maryland, he had shown many favors, and who repaid him tenfold in the deep devotion of their unselfish love, as they wafted his departed spirit to the gates of heaven on their trembling petition, and closed his eyes in death; with the blessing of the venerable octogenarian priest of Lancaster, still living, who loved and honored him through life, cleansed his soul from sin, and that his spirit was admitted to the mansions of the blest?

But, Mr. Speaker, I am apparently forgetting that I turned my footsteps only for a moment with this sad procession, not to deliver any eulogy or to recall his frailties. I rose simply to fling upon his passing bier a flower—would that it were worthier—a daisy or a shamrock, wet with the dew-drop of a sincere and sympathizing tear; and join in the prayer which thousands waft to Heaven to-day that his spirit may rest in eternal peace.

Remarks by Mr. Sypher.

Mr. SPEAKER: The character of Mr. Stevens in his relations as a fellow-townsman has been most ably and appropriately commented on by the gentleman from Pennsylvania who succeeds him in this house. His distinguished services in the State of his adoption, both in the cause of common schools and the construction of public works, may with just propriety be cited as among the most honorable achievements of his life. I pass over the period given to fostering and building up the institutions of the great commonwealth which he so highly honored, and come immediately to lay upon the grave of this

Hosted by Google

great champion of freedom the grateful thanks of an emancipated race, of a disenthralled people, and of States regenerated. It is not unnatural that the loyal constituency of myself and colleagues on this floor from the south should have regarded Mr. Stevens as the foremost as well as the most earnest and trustworthy defender of their rights. These people have ever been in the peculiar situation of living within the lines of the enemy, and, therefore, during all their days of hope and nights of despair, looking northward for deliverance, the stalwart form of him who always led the advance guard, and who never retired behind the picket line, was ever most prominently in view.

Thaddeus Stevens was born a leader. Men, policies, and parties were not allowed to stand in his way. His life was devoted to the cause of humanity, and whatever race or individual wrongfully oppressed strove to rise above the oppressor, found in him a true and faithful friend and able advocate.

Thirty years' active participation in the anti-slavery movement in this country, and a thorough analysis of the character of the slaveholder, had fully prepared him to enter into an armed struggle against treason and traitors. He had no sympathy with peace conferences, compromises, and resolutions of pacification. In the autumn of 1860 he wrote to a young man then in Memphis, Tennessee, "The only way to end this rebellion is to conquer the rebels." From the first hour when secession was proclaimed in South Carolina and the property of the nation was seized by southern rebels his voice was for war. In State and in national council, in his place on the floor of this house, in private conferences with the President and the cabinet, he advocated a vigorous prosecution of the war on war principles. His propositions were so bold that timid men were startled and stood fixed in amazement. Before the sound of the first gun fired in the cause of treason and rebellion had reached the northern border of the

Hosted by Google

republic, he declared that freedom should be proclaimed to every slave in the land, and the loyal men of the south, both white and black, should be invited to enroll themselves in defence of the Union. He maintained that public safety demanded nothing less. The brave old man would have called a million of men into service and would have marched amid the clash of steel and the roar of artillery from the Potomac to the Gulf.

Thus he would have swept treason before him, and behind him, he would have left an unquestionable guarantee of perfect equality of rights before the law. In the spring of 1862 he declared upon this floor in favor of immediate emancipation. President Lincoln plainly and emphatically expressed his disapprobation of this measure, and avowed that the administration was not in sympathy with that movement. Late in the summer, after the nation had been disciplined by the failure of the peninsular campaign, President Lincoln turned to the speech in which this great and wise measure was advocated. He sent for Mr. Stevens, apologized for the opposition made to him, and declared himself in favor of emancipation. These two great men of the nation were agreed as to the fact, but differed as to time. Stevens favored immediate emancipation; Lincoln thought best to give the rebels due notice that they would lose their slaves if they did not lay down their arms. Fortunate, thrice fortunate for the nation and especially for my constituents, the God of nations hardened the hearts of the enemy and they did not cease to make war, and therefore, at the expiration of one hundred days, came the proclamation of freedom that Stevens would have issued three hundred days before.

Following the emancipation came the struggle on the question of arming the colored men of the south, who had just obtained the right of self-ownership. Stevens again boldly advanced to the picket line and lashed his tardy compeers up

Hosted by Google

to the duty of self-preservation. When the last terrible blow had crushed armed rebellion the work of the soldier ended and that of the statesman began; then the doctrine of universal amnesty was promulgated from the highest places in the nation; it was preached from the pulpit; it was recommended in cabinet; it was advocated in the most powerful journals in the land. In the mighty struggle that followed, wherein all that had been won by force of arms was about to be sacrificed by the sophistry of diplomacy, Stevens was again the bulwark of the nation, almost the sole defender of the rights of the loyal millions of the southern States. But for his services in the work of reconstruction a whole race of people, upon whom the first rays of the light of freedom had just dawned, would have been surrendered unconditionally into the hands of the enemy.

Step by step he fought his way up, dragging the nation after him, until he attained, by the aid of many able and brave associates in Congress, the organization and establishment of governments in the rebellious States upon the basis of a loyal citizenship and perfect equality of rights. In this final labor of his life, when victory dawned upon the nation, the heroic old man died at his post, beckoning the people forward to higher and nobler achievements. Never will the services of this great man be duly appreciated by those in the defence of whose rights he so manfully struggled. His name, with that of Lincoln, will ever be remembered with the warmest emotions of gratitude by this and succeeding generations of the emancipated people of America, when others now esteemed great shall have been forgotten. He needs no statue of bronze, no pillar of marble with carved inscriptions to tell posterity his fame. The labors and achievements of his life have rendered him immortal. In the name of the loyal south, whose fertile fields have been opened to free and skilled

Hosted by Google

labor; in the name of toiling millions seeking homesteads; in the name of States now no longer cursed by slavery; in the name of a people struggling from abject slavery up to perfect freedom; in the name of a race once declared to be possessed of no rights which white men were bound to respect, but now clothed with the full rights of citizenship, which the whole power of the nation is pledged to defend, I thank God that Thaddeus Stevens lived and labored and triumphed.

Remarks by Mr. Whittemore.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot expect, nor do I endeavor, to excel the words "so fitly spoken" eulogistic of the life, character, influence, and worth of "the great commoner," whose name has dwelt so often upon the lips of the whole people, whose words and works have become a part of the history of our national greatness, whose good and generous heart beat in sympathy for all humanity, whose every effort was inspired for the elevation, improvement, and prosperity of the race; but I can express somewhat the grief which the people of my State, in common with our whole country, have felt in the loss of him who was the friend of all men, who loved his neighbor as himself, who was an invincible pioneer in all the noble measures which have become the security of our hopes and the ark of safety of our national unity. The emancipated, the enfranchised, the reconstructed, the restored States, the millions redeemed from the house of bondage, once chattels, now freemen, with their title deeds of citizenship guaranteed, who owe so much to his untiring efforts in their behalf, his uncompromising fidelity to the right, felt in his loss that a peer of Abraham Lincoln had fallen; and in their memories will ever live sacred associations clustering around the counsels he has given, the hope and courage he has inspired, the

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google